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MEN, WOMEN, AND BOOKS;

A SELECTION OF

SKETCHES, ESSAYS, AND CRITICAL MEMOIRS,

FROM HIS

UNCOLLECTED PROSE WRITINGS.

BY

LEIGH HUNT.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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MEN, WOMEN, AND BOOKS.

SOCIAL MORALITY.

SUCKLING AND BEN JONSON.

Curious instance of variability in moral opinion.—Pope's tradition of Sir John Suckling and the cards.—New edition of Ben Jonson, and samples of the genius and arrogance of that writer, with a summary of his poetical character.

It is curious to see the opinion entertained in every successive age respecting the unimproveability or unalterableness of its prevailing theory of morals, compared with their actual fluctuation. The "philosopher owns with a sigh" (as Gibbon would have phrased it,—for we believe there is an ultimate preferment for mankind in this tendency to follow a fashion), that a court, a king, the example of a single ruling individual, can affect the virtues of an age far beyond the whole mass of their ordinary practisers, —at least, so as to give the moral colour to the period, and throw the bias in favour of this or that

tendency. The staid habits of George III., in certain respects, produced a corresponding profession of them throughout the country; but the case was different in the reigns of the Georges before him, who, dull individuals as they were, kept mistresses like their sprightlier predecessors. Even William III. had a mistress. In Cromwell's time, the prevailing moral strength, or *virtus*, consisted in a sense of religion. It may be answered, that these fashions, as far as they were such, did not influence either the practice or opinions of conscientious men; but our self-love would be mistaken in that conclusion. Our remote ancestors were not the less cannibals because we shudder at the idea of dining upon Jones; neither would some very near ones fail to startle us with their opinions upon matters, which we take it for granted, they regarded in the same light as ourselves. No longer than a hundred years back, and in the mouth of no less a moralist than Pope, we find the following puzzling bit of information respecting Sir John Suckling:—

"Suckling was an immoral man, *as well as* debauched."

Now, where is the distinction, in our present moral system, between immorality and debauchery? All immorality is not debauchery, but all debauchery we hold to be immoral. What could Pope mean?

Why, he meant that Sir John cheated at cards. Neither his drinking nor his gallantry were to be understood as affecting his moral character. It

was the use of cards with marks upon them that was to deprive debauchery of its good name! "The story of the French cards," continues Pope, in explanation of his above remark, "was told me by the late Duke of Buckingham; and he had it from old Lady Dorset herself."

We are by no means convinced, by the way, that Suckling gave into such a disgraceful practice, merely because the Duke of Buckingham was told so by "old Lady Dorset."

"That lady," resumes the poet (he is talking to Spence, and these stories are from "Spence's Anecdotes"), "took a very odd pride in boasting of her familiarities with Sir John Suckling. She is the mistress and goddess in his poems; and several of those pieces were given by herself to the printer. This the Duke of Buckingham used to give as one instance of the fondness she had to let the world know how well they were acquainted."

> "To be taken, to be seen,
> These have crimes accounted been."

The age was not scrupulous about the fact, but it was held very wrong to mention it; and hence Lady Dorset was accounted a loose speaker, and doubtless not to be quite trusted. The dishonest cards themselves did not affect the pride she took in the card-player. Query, how far such a woman was to be believed in anything? But the most curious part of the business remains what it was—to-wit, Pope's

own discrepation of immorality from debauchery. And as the Reverend Mr. Spence expresses no amazement at the passage, it will be hardly unfair to conclude that *he* saw nothing in it to surprise him. We believe we have already observed somewhere, that Swift, who was a dignitary of the church, was intimate with the reputed mistresses of two kings,—the Countess of Suffolk, George the Second's favourite, and the Countess of Orkney, King William's. The latter he pronounced to be the "wisest woman he ever knew," as the former was declared by all her friends to be one of the most amiable. But we may see how little gallantry was thought ill of, in the epistolary correspondences of those times, Pope's included, and in the encouraging banter, for instance, which he gives on the subject to his friend Gay, whose whole life appears to have been passed in a good-humoured sensualism. See also how Pope, and Swift, and others, trumped up Lord Bolingbroke for a philosopher!—a man who, besides being profound in nothing but what may be called the elegant extracts of common-place, was one of the most debauched of men of the world.

As we have touched upon Spence's Anecdotes, we might as well look farther into the book, since it is a very fit one to notice in these articles, and occasions many a pleasant chat at a fireside. The late republication of the works of Ben Jonson has given a fresh interest to such remarks as the following:—

"It was a general opinion (says Pope) that Ben

Jonson and Shakspeare lived in enmity against one another. Betterton has assured me often, that there was nothing in it, and that such a supposition was founded only on the two parties, which in their lifetime listed under one, and endeavoured to lessen the character of the other mutually. Dryden used to think, that the verses Jonson made on Shakspeare's death had something of satire at the bottom; for my part I can't discover anything like it in them."

We are now reading Ben Jonson through in Mr. Moxon's beautiful edition, and having finished nearly all his dramas, and not long since read his miscellaneous poems, and our memory serving us pretty well for what remains to be re-perused, our impression of him is, at all events, fresh upon us.

A critic in the *Times*,* whose pen is otherwise so good as to make us regret its party bias, appears to us to have treated Jonson's new editor, Mr. Barry Cornwall, with a very unjustifiable air of scorn and indignation, both as if he had no right to speak of Ben Jonson at all, and as if he possessed no merit as a writer himself. It is not necessary to the reputation of Mr. Cornwall that we should undertake to defend what such critics as Lamb and Hazlitt have admired. The writer of the beautiful "Dramatic Sketches" (which were the first to restore the quick impulsive dialogue of the old poets), and a greater number of excellent songs than have been written by any man living except Mr. Moore, has surely every

* 1839.

right in the world, dramatic and lyrical, to speak of Ben Jonson, unless you were to except that sympathy with his coarseness and his love of the caustic, which, saving a poor verbal tact, and a worship of authority, was the only qualification for a critical sense of him possessed by the petulant and presumptuous Gifford. But the *Times'* critic has been led perhaps to this depreciation of the new editor, by thinking he has greatly undervalued a favourite author: while, on the other hand, we ourselves cannot but think that Mr. Cornwall, with all his admiration of him, has yet somewhat depreciated Ben Jonson in consequence of his over-valuement by others. It appears to us, that he does not do justice to the serious part of him,—to the grandeur, for example, which is often to be found in his graver writing, both as to thought and style, sometimes, we think, amounting even to the "sublime,"—which is a quality our poet totally denies him. We would instance that answer of Cethegus to Catiline, when the latter says—

> "Who would not fall, with all the world about him?
> CETHEGUS.—*Not I, that would stand on it, when it falls.*"

Also the passage where it is said of Catiline, advancing with his army,

> "The day grew black with him,
> *And Fate descended nearer to the earth;*"

and the other in which he is described as coming on

"Not with the face
Of *any man*, but of *a public ruin*;"

(though we think we have read that in some Latin author, and indeed it is at all times difficult to say where Jonson has not been borrowing). The vindictive quietness of Cicero's direction to the lictors to put Statilius and Gabinius to death, is very like a sublimation above the highest ordinary excitability of human resentment. Marlowe might have written it—

"Take them
To your *cold hands*, and let them *feel death* from you."

And the rising of the ghost of Sylla, by way of prologue to this play, uttering, as he rises,

"*Dost thou not feel me*, ROME?"

appears to us decidedly sublime,—making thus the evil spirit of one man equal to the great city, and to all the horrors that are about to darken it. Nor is the opening of the speech of Envy, as prologue to the "Poetaster," far from something of a like elevation. The accumulated passion, in her shape, thinks herself warranted to insult the light, and her insult is very grand:—

"Light, I salute thee, but with wounded nerves,
Wishing thy golden splendour pitchy darkness."

Milton has been here, and in numerous other places, imitating his learned and lofty-tongued predecessor.

On the other hand, besides acknowledging the greatness of his powers in general, and ranking him

as second only in his age to Shakspeare (which might surely propitiate the fondest partizan), Mr. Cornwall has done ample and eloquent justice to Jonson's powers as a satirist, to his elegant learning, and his profuse and graceful fancy; and if he objects to his tediousness, coarseness, and boasting, and to the praise emphatically bestowed on him for "judgment," we are compelled to say, in spite of our admiration and even love of the old poet (for it is difficult to help loving those to whom we are indebted for great pleasures) that we think he might have spoken more strongly on all those points, and not been either unjust or immodest. If Jonson, in spite of his airs of independence, had not been a Tory poet and a court flatterer, the Tory critics (we do not say the present one, but the race in general,) would have trampled upon him for his arrogance, quite as much as they have exalted him. Even Gifford would have insulted him, though he evidently liked him out of a vanity of self-love, as well as from the sympathies above mentioned. The right equilibrium in Jonson's mind was so far overborne by his leaning to power in preference to the beautiful (which is an inconsistency, and, so to speak, unnaturalness in the poetical condition), that while he was ever huffing and lecturing the very audiences that came to hear him, he could not help consulting the worst taste of their majorities, and writing whole plays, like "Bartholomew Fair," full of the absolutest, and sometimes loathsomest, trash, to show that he was as

strong as their united vulgar knowledges; and, he might have added, as dull in his condescension to boot. And as to the long-disputed question, whether he was arrogant or not, and a "swaggerer" (which indeed, as Charles Lamb has intimated, might be shown, after a certain sublimated fashion, in the very characters in which he chiefly excelled—Sir Epicure Mammon, Bobadil, &c., and, it may be added, Catiline and Sejanus too), how anybody, who ever read his plays, could have doubted, or affected to doubt it, is a puzzle that can only be accounted for, upon what accounts for any critical phenomenon,—party or personal feeling.

"That Ben Jonson," says the critic in the *Times*, "had not the most equable temper in the world—that he had a high opinion of his own capacity, and saw no reason to conceal it, we at once admit: but such defects are often the concomitants of generous and noble minds; and we should recollect that, if he was fierce when assailed, few men have had equal provocation during life, or baser injustice done to their memory. Jonson's enemies, to whom Mr. Barry Cornwall has a hankering wish to lean, seem to have been a mere set of obscure authors dependent on the theatre, to whose reputation Jonson's success was perhaps injurious, and whose minds, at least, seem to have been embittered by it. Horace, Ovid, Aristophanes, and twenty other poets, have praised themselves more highly than he did. Milton, who seems to have had Ben Jonson's works

much in his hands, his style, both in verse and prose, being evidently modelled on that of his predecessor, imitated him in this likewise."

Now, what "provocation" Jonson had during his life, which his own assumptions did not originate, is yet, we believe, to be ascertained. The obscure authors, of whom his enemies are here made to consist, were, by his own showing (as well by allusion as by acknowledged characterization), some, perhaps all, of the most admired of our old English dramatists then writing, with the exception of Beaumont and Fletcher. Self-praise was a fashion in ancient poetry, but has never been understood as more allowable to modern imitation than the practice of self-murder, which was also an ancient fashion; and if Milton, amidst his glorious pedantries (of the better spirit of which, as well as a worse, Jonson must be allowed to have partaken) permitted himself to indulge in personal boasting, it was in a very different style indeed from that of his predecessor, as the reader may judge from the following specimens. Ben says of his muse,—

> "The garland that she wears their hands must twine,
> Who can both censure, understand, define
> What merit is: then cast those piercing rays
> Round as a crown, instead of honour'd bays,
> About his poesy; which, *he knows, affords*
> *Words above action, matter above words.*"
>
> Prologue to CYNTHIA'S REVELS.

And "Cynthia's Revels" is, upon the whole, a very

poor production, with scarcely a beautiful passage in it, except the famous lyric, "Queen and Huntress." Yet in the epilogue to this play (as if conscious that his "will" must serve for the deed), the actor who delivers it is instructed to talk thus:—

> "To crave your favour with a begging knee,
> Were to distrust the writer's faculty.
> To promise better, when the next we bring,
> Prorogues disgrace, commends not anything.
> Stiffly to stand on this, and proudly approve
> The play, might tax the maker of self-love.
> I'll only speak what I have heard him say,
> '*By God! 't is good, and if you like 't, you may.*'"

The critics, naturally enough, thought this not over modest; so in the prologue to his next play, the "Poetaster" (which was written to ridicule pretension in his adversaries), he makes a prologue "in armour" tread Envy under foot, and requests the audience that, if he should once more swear his play is good, they would not charge *him* with "arrogance," for he "loathes" it; only he knows "the strength of his own muse," and they who object to such phrases in him are the "common spawn of ignorance," "base detractors," and "illiterate apes." In this play of the "Poetaster," the scene of which is laid in the court of Augustus, Jonson himself is "Horace," and such men as Decker and Marston the fops and dunces whom Horace satirizes; and in the epilogue, after saying that he will leave "the monsters" to their fate, he

informs his hearers, that he means to write a tragedy next time, in which he shall essay

> "To strike the ear of time in those fresh strains,
> As shall, *beside the cunning of their ground,*
> *Give cause to some of wonder, some despite,*
> *And some despair, to imitate the sound.*"

The tragedy, accordingly, of "Sejanus" made its appearance: in an address concerning which to the reader, while noticing some old classical rules which he has not attended to, he says, "In the mean time, if, in truth of argument, dignity of persons, *gravity and height of elevation, fulness and frequency of sentence,* I have discharged the other offices of a tragic writer, let not the absence of those forms be imputed to me, wherein I shall give you occasion hereafter, *and without my boast,* to think *I could better prescribe,* than omit the due sense of, for want of a convenient knowledge."

In the dedication of "The Fox" to the two Universities, the writer's language, speaking of some "worthier fruits," which he hopes to put forth, is this:—"Wherein, if my hearers be true to me, *I shall raise the despised head of poetry again,* and stripping her out of those *rotten and base rags wherewith the times have adulterated her form,* restore her to her primitive habit, feature, and majesty, *and render her worthy to be embraced and kissed of all the great and master-spirits of our world.*" And beautifully is this said. *But Shakspeare had then nearly written all*

his plays, AND WAS STILL WRITING! The three preceding years are supposed to have produced "Macbeth," "Lear," and "Othello!" Marston, Decker, Chapman, Drayton, Middleton, Webster; in short, almost all those whom posterity admires or reverences under the title of the Old English Dramatists, were writing also; and it was but nine years before, that Spenser had published the second part of the "Fairie Queene," in which the "despised head of poetry" had been set up with the lustre of an everlasting sun, and such as surely had not let darkness in upon the land again, followed as it was by all those dramatic lights, and the double or triple sun of Shakspeare himself! The "master-spirits" whom Ben speaks of, must at once have laughed at the vanity, and been sorry for the genius, of the man who could so talk in such an age. Above all, what could Shakspeare have thought of his wayward, his learned, but in these respects certainly not very wise, nor very *friendly*, *friend?* We could quote similar evidences of the most preposterous self-love from the prologues or epilogues, or the body, of the greater part of his plays: but we tire of the task, especially when we think, not only of the genius which did *itself* as well as others such injustice, but of the good-nature that lay at the bottom of his very arrogance and envy; for, that he strongly felt the passion of envy, *of which he is always accusing others*, we have as little doubt, as that he struggled against and surmounted it at frequent and glorious intervals;

and, besides his saying more things in praise as well as blame of his contemporaries than any man living (partly perhaps in his assumed right of censor, but much also out of a joviality of good-will) his lines to the memory of Shakspeare do as much honour to the final goodness of his heart, as to the grace and dignity of his style and imagination.

But even his friends as well as enemies thought him immodest and arrogant, and publicly lamented it. See what Randolph and Carew, as well as Owen Feltham, say of him in their responses to his famous ode, beginning,

> "Come, leave the loathed stage,
> And the more loathsome age!"

an invective, which he wrote because one of his plays had been damned.

In short, Ben is an anomaly in the list of great poets; and we can only account for him, as for a greater (Dante,—who has contrived to make his muse more grandly disagreeable), by supposing that his nature included the contradictions of some ill-matched progenitors, and that, while he had a grace for one parent or ancestor, he had a slut and fury for another.

Nor should we have taken these liberties with so great a name, but in our zeal for the greater names of truth and justice. *Amicus*, Ben Jonson; *amicus* every clever critic, whether in Whig paper or Tory; but *magis amica*, Proof.

If asked to give our opinion of Ben Jonson's powers in general, we should say that he was a poet of a high order, as far as learning, fancy, and an absolute rage of ambition, could conspire to make him one; but that he never touched at the highest, except by violent efforts, and during the greatest felicity of his sense of success. The material so predominated in him over the spiritual,—the sensual over the sentimental,—that he was more social than loving, and far more wilful and fanciful than imaginative. Desiring the strongest immediate effect, rather than the best effect, he subserved by wholesale in his comedies to the grossness and common-place of the very multitude whom he hectored; and in love with whatsoever he knew or uttered, he set learning above feeling in writing his tragedies, and never knew when to leave off, whether in tragedy or comedy. His style is more clear and correct than impassioned, and only rises above a certain level at remarkable intervals, when he is heated by a sense of luxury or domination. He betrays what was weak in himself, and even a secret misgiving, by incessant attacks upon the weakness and envy of others; and, in his highest moods, instead of the healthy, serene, and good-natured might of Shakspeare, has something of a puffed and uneasy pomp, a bigness instead of greatness, analogous to his gross habit of body: nor, when you think of him at any time, can you well separate the idea from that of the assuming scholar and the flustered

man of taverns. But the wonder after all is, that, having such a superfœtation of art in him, he had still so much nature; and that the divine bully of the old English Parnassus could be, whenever he chose it, one of the most elegant of men.

POPE, IN SOME LIGHTS IN WHICH HE IS NOT USUALLY REGARDED.

Unfaded interest of the subject of Pope and others.—Shakspeare not equally at home with modern life, though more so with general humanity.—Letters of Pope.—A wood-engraving a century ago.—Pope with a young lady in a stage-coach.—Dining with maids of honour.—Riding to Oxford by moonlight.—Lovability not dependent on shape.—Insincerity not always what it is taken for.—Whigs, Tories, and Catholics.—Masterly exposition of the reason why people live uncomfortably together.—"Rondeaulx," and a Rondeau.

Those who have been conversant in early life with Pope and the other wits of Queen Anne, together with the Bellendens, Herveys, Lady Suffolks, and other feminities, are never tired of hearing of them afterwards, let their subsequent studies be as lofty as they may in the comparison. We can no more acquire a dislike to them, than we can give up a regard for the goods and chattels to which we

have been accustomed in our houses, or for the costume with which we associate the ideas of our uncles, and aunts, and grandfathers. They are authors who come within our own era of manners and customs,—within the period of coats and waistcoats, and snuff-taking, and the same kinds of eating and drinking; they have lived under the same dynasty of the Georges, speak the same unobsolete language, and inhabit the same houses; in short, are *at home* with us. Shakspeare, with all his marvellous power of coming among us, and making us laugh and weep so as none of them can, still comes (so to speak) in a doublet and beard; he is an *ancestor*,—" Master Shakspeare,"—one who says " yea" and " nay," and never heard of Pall Mall or the opera. The others are " yes" and " no" men—swearers of last Tuesday's oaths, or payers of its compliments—cousins, and aunts, and every-day acquaintances. Pope is " Mr. Pope," and comes to " tea" with us. Nobody, alas! ever drank *tea* with Shakspeare! The sympathies of a slip-slop breakfast are not his; nor of coffee, nor Brussells carpets, nor girandoles and *ormoulu;* neither did he ever take snuff, or a sedan, or a " coach" to the theatre; nor behold, poor man! the coming glories of silver forks. His very localities are no longer ours except in name; whereas the Cork-streets, and St. James's-streets, and Kensingtons, are still almost the identical places—in many respects really such—in which the Arbuthnots lived, and the Steeles

lounged, and the Maids of Honour romped in the gardens at night time, to the scandal of such of the sisterhood as had become married.*

Another reason why one likes the wits and poets of that age is, that, besides being contemporary with one's common-places, they have associated them with their wit and elegance. We know not how the case may be with others, but this is partly the reason why we like the houses built a century ago, with their old red brick, and their seats in the windows. A portrait of the same period is the next thing to having the people with us; and we rarely see a tea-table at which a graceful woman presides, without its reminding us of "The Rape of the Lock." It hangs her person with sylphs as well as jewellery, and inclines us to use a pair of scissors with the same blissful impudence as my Lord Petre.†

* Vide the "Suffolk Correspondence," vol. i. p. 333.

† The reader need scarcely be reminded that the "peer" who "spread the glittering forfex wide," was a Lord Petre, of the noble Catholic family still existing. As the poem was written in 1711, he must have been "Robert, seventh Baron Petre," who succeeded to the title in 1707, and died in 1713. He married the year after the writing of the poem, and died the year following; so that his life seems to have been "short and sweet." It is pleasant to see, by the peerages, that the family intermarried in the present century with that of the Blounts of Mapledurham—the friends of Pope; and that one of the sisters of the bride was named Arabella, probably after Arabella

There is a third reason, perhaps, lying sometimes underneath our self-love; but it takes a sort of impudence in the very modesty to own it; for who can well dare to say that he ever feels oppressed by the genius of Shakspeare and his contemporaries! As if there could be any possibility of rivalry! Who ventures to measure his utmost vanity with the skies? or to say to all nature, "You really excel the existing generation?" And yet something of oppressiveness in the shape of wonder and admiration may be allowed to turn us away at times from the contemplation of Shakspeare or the stars, and make us willing to repose in the easy chairs of Pope and one's grandmother. We confess, for our own parts, that as

> "Love may venture in,
> Where it dare not well be seen;"

or rather, as true, hearty, loving, vanity-forgetting love warrants us in keeping company with the greatest of the loving, so we do find ourselves in general quite at our ease in the society of Shakspeare himself, emotion apart. We are rendered so by the humanity that reconciles us to our defects, and by the wisdom which preferred love before all things. Setting hats and caps aside, and coming to

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Fermor, the Belinda of the poet. A sense of the honours conferred by genius gives the finishing grace to noble families that have the luck to possess them.

pure flesh and blood, and whatsoever survives fashion and conventionalism, who can jest so heartily as he? who so make you take "your ease at your inn?" who talk and walk with you, feel, fancy, imagine; be in the woods, the clouds, fairy-land, among friends (there is no man so fond of drawing friends as he is), or if you want a charming woman to be in love with and live with for ever, who can so paint her in a line?

"Pretty, and witty; wild, and yet too, gentle."

All that the Popes and Priors could have conspired with all the Suffolks and Montagues to say of delightful womanhood, could not have out-valued the comprehensiveness of that line. Still, as one is accustomed to think even of the most exquisite women in connexion with some costume or other, be it no more than a slipper to her foot, modern dress insists upon clothing them to one's imagination, in preference to dress ancient. We cannot love them so entirely in the dresses of Arcadia, or in the ruffs and top-knots of the time of Elizabeth, as in the tuckers and tresses to which we have been accustomed. As they approach our own times, they partake of the warmness of our homes. "Anne Page" might have been handsomer, but we cannot take to her so heartily as to "Nancy Dawson," or to "Mary Lepell." Imogen there seems no matching or dispensing with; and yet Lady Winchelsea

when Miss Kingsmill, or Mrs. Brooke when she was Fanny Moore the clergyman's daughter, dancing under the cherry-trees of the parsonage-garden, and "as remarkable for her gentleness and suavity of manners as for her literary talents,"—we cannot but feel that the "Miss" and the "Fanny" carries us away with it, in spite of all the realities mixed up with those desuetudes of older times.

We have been led into these reflections by a volume of Pope's Letters, which we read over again the other day, and which found our regard for him as fresh as ever, notwithstanding all that we have learnt to love and admire more. We cannot live with Pope and the wits as entirely as we used to do at one period. Circumstances have re-opened new worlds to us, both real and ideal, which have as much enlarged (thank Heaven!) our possessions, as though to a house of the sort above mentioned had been added the gardens of all the east, and the forests (with all their visions) of Greece and the feudal times. Still the house is there, furnished as aforesaid, and never to be given up. And as men after all their day-dreams, whether of poetry or of *business* (for it is little suspected how much fancy mingles even with that), are glad to be called to dinner or tea, and see the dear familiar faces about them, so, though the author we admire most be Shakspeare, and the two books we can least dispense with on our shelves are Spenser and the "Arabian

Nights," we never quit these to look at our Pope, and our Parnell and Thomson, without a sort of household pleasure in our eyes, and a grasp of the volume as though some Mary Lepell, or Margaret Bellenden, or some Mary or Marianne of our own, had come into the room herself, and held out to us her cordial hand.

Here, then, is a volume of "Pope's Letters," complete in itself (not one of the voluminous edition), a duodecimo, lettered as just mentioned, bound in calf (plain at the sides, but gilt and flowered at the back), and possessing a portrait with cap, open shirt-collar, and great black eyes. We are bibliomaniacs enough to like to give these details, and hope that the reader does not despise them. At the top of the first letter, there is one of those engraved head-pieces, of ludicrously ill-design and execution, which used to "adorn" books a century ago;—things like uncouth dreams, magnified out of all proportion, and innocent of possibility. The subject of the present is Hero and Leander. Hero, with four dots for eyes, nose, and mouth, is as tall as the tower itself out of which she is leaning; and Leander has had a sort of platform made for him at the side of the tower, flat on the water, and obviously on purpose to accommodate his dead body; just as though a coroner's inquest had foreseen the necessity there would be for it. But we must not be tempted at present into dwelling upon illustrations of this kind. We design some day, if a wood en-

graver will stand by us, to give something of an historical sketch of their progress through old romances, classics, and spelling-books, with commentaries as we proceed, and a "fetching out" of their beauties; not without an eye to those initial letters and tail-pieces, in which As and Bs, nymphs, satyrs, and dragons, &c. flourish into every species of monstrous, grotesque, and half-human exuberance.

What we would more particularly take occasion to say from the volume before us, agreeably to our design of noticing whatever has been least or not at all noticed by the biographers, is, that notwithstanding our long intimacy with the writings of Pope, we found in it some things which we do not remember to have observed before,—little points of personal interest, which become great enough in connection with such a man to be of consequence to those who would fain know him as if they had lived with him, and which the biographers (who, in fact, seldom do more than repeat one another) have not thought it worth their while to attend to.

The first is, that whereas the personal idea of Pope, which we generally present to our minds in consequence of the best-known prints of him is that of an elderly man, we here chiefly see him as a young one, from the age of sixteen to thirty, and mostly while he lived at Binfield in Windsor Forest, when his principal fame arose from his happiest production, "The Rape of the Lock." We see him also

caressed, as he deserved to be, by the ladies; and intimating with a becoming ostentation (considering the consciousness of his personal defects which he so touchingly avows at other times), what a very "lively young fellow" he was (to speak in the language of the day), and how pleased they were to pay him attention. The late republication of the writings of Lady Mary Wortley Montague has revived the discussion respecting her supposed, and but too probable *brusquerie* towards him (for no man deserved greater delicacy in repulse from a woman, than one so sensitive and so unhappily formed as he). We shall here give, as a counter lump of sugar to those old bitters, a passage from a letter written when he was twenty-one, in which he describes the effect which the gaiety of his conversation had on a young lady whom he met in a stage-coach. What he says about a "sick woman" being the "worst of evils," is not quite so well. It is not in the taste of Spenser and the other great poets his superiors; yet we must not take it in its worst sense either, but only as one of those "airs" which it was thought becoming in such "young fellows" to give themselves in those days, when people had not properly recovered from the unsentimentalizing effects of the gallantry of the court of Charles II. For the better exhibitions of these our passages of interest, rescued from the comparative obscurity occasioned by the neglect of biographers, we shall give them heads.

POPE ADMIRED BY A YOUNG LADY IN A STAGE COACH.

"The morning after I parted from you, I found myself (as I had prophecy'd) all alone, in an uneasy stage coach; a doleful change from that agreeable company I enjoyed the night before! without the least hope of entertainment, but from my last resource in such cases—a book. I then began to enter into an acquaintance with the *moralists*, and had just received from them some cold consolation for the inconvenience of this life and the uncertainty of human affairs, when I perceived my vehicle to stop, and heard from the side of it the dreadful news of a sick woman preparing to enter it. 'Tis not easy to guess at my mortification; but being so well fortified with philosophy I stood resigned, with a stoical constancy, to endure the worst of evils—a sick woman. I was, indeed, a little comforted to find by her voice and dress that she was a gentlewoman; but no sooner was her hood removed, but I saw one of the most beautiful faces I ever beheld; and to increase my surprise, I heard her salute me by my name. I never had more reason to accuse nature for making me short-sighted than now, when I could not recollect I had ever seen those fair eyes which knew me so well, and was utterly at a loss how to address myself; till, with a great deal of simplicity and innocence, she let me know (even before I discovered my ignorance) that she was the daughter of one in our neighbourhood, lately married, who having been consulting her physicians in town, was returning into the country, to try what good air and a new husband could do to recover her. My father, you must know, has sometimes recommended the study of physic to me; but I never had any ambition to be a doctor till this instant. I ventured to prescribe some fruit (which I happened to have in the coach), which being forbidden her by her doctors, she had the more inclination to; in short, I tempted her, and she ate; nor was I more like the devil, than she like 'Eve.' Having the good success of the aforesaid gentleman before my eyes, I put on the

gallantry of the old serpent, and in spite of my evil form, accosted her with all the gaiety I was master of, which had so good effect, that in less than an hour she grew pleasant, her colour returned, and she was pleased to say my prescription had wrought an immediate cure; in a word, I had the pleasantest journey imaginable."

We learn from this passage, by the way, that Pope's father sometimes expressed his wish to see his son a physician. The son, however, wisely avoided a profession which would have severely tried his health, and not very well have suited his personal appearance. Otherwise, there can be no doubt he would have made an excellent member of the faculty,—learned, bland, sympathetic, and entertaining.

The passage we shall extract next is better known, but we give it because Maids of Honour are again flourishing. The poet is here again at his ease with the fair sex. The "prince, with all his ladies on horseback," is George II., then Prince of Wales, who is thus seen compelling his wife's maids of honour to ride out with him whether their mistress went or not, and to go hunting "over hedges and ditches on borrowed hacks!" The case is otherwise now; and the lovely Margaret Dillons, and Spring Rices, and Listers, have the luck to follow a gentlewoman instead of a brute. They can also go in carriages instead of on horseback, when they prefer it. Whether they have not still, however, occasionally to undergo that dreadful catas-

trophe,—"a red mark in the forehead from an uneasy hat," may be made a question.

POPE DINING AND WALKING BY MOONLIGHT WITH MAIDS OF HONOUR.

"I went by water to Hampton Court, unattended by all but my own virtues, which were not of so modest a nature as to keep themselves or me concealed; for I met the prince with all his ladies on horseback coming from hunting. Mrs. B—— (Bellenden) * and Mrs. L—— (Lepell) took me into protection (contrary to the laws against harbouring papists), and gave me a dinner, with something I liked better—an opportunity of conversation with Mrs. H—— (Howard, afterwards Lady Suffolk). We all agreed that the life of a maid of honour was of all things the most miserable; and wished that every woman who envied had a specimen of it. To eat Westphalia ham in a morning, ride over hedges and ditches on borrowed hacks, come home in the heat of the day with a fever, and (what is worse a hundred times) with a red mark in the forehead from an uneasy hat; all this may qualify them to make excellent wives for fox-hunters, and bear abundance of ruddy-complexioned children. As soon as they can wipe off the sweat of the day, they must simper an hour, and catch cold in the princess's apartment; from thence (as Shakspeare has it) "to dinner with what appetite they may;" and after that, till midnight, walk, work, or think, which they please. I can easily believe no lone house in Wales, with a mountain and rookery, is more contemplative than this court; and as a proof of it, I need only tell you, Mrs. L—— walked all alone with me three or four hours by moonlight; and we met no creature of any quality

* The old title of *Mistress*, applied to unmarried ladies, was then still struggling with that of *Miss*; each was occasionally given.

but the king, who gave audience to the vice-chamberlain, all alone, under the garden-wall."

We hope Lady Mary Wortley saw this letter; for she was jealous of the witty and beautiful Lepell, who married a flame of hers, Lord Hervey; and though she is understood to have scorned the pretensions of Pope herself, it is in the nature of dispositions like hers not to witness pretensions paid even to the rejected without a pang.

Our closing extract will mount the little immortal, in his turn, upon an eminence, on which he is certainly very seldom contemplated in the thoughts of any body; and yet it was a masculine one to which he appears to have been accustomed; to-wit, horse-back. He rides in the present instance from Binfield to Oxford, a distance of thirty miles, no mean one for his delicate frame. In a subsequent letter we find him taking the like journey and to the same place, in company with Lintott the bookseller, of whose overweening manners, and "eye," meanwhile, "to business," he gives a very amusing account, not omitting an intimation that he was the better rider, and did not at all suffer under the bookseller's cockney inexperience. But we prefer to see him journeying by himself. There is a sweet and poetical thoughtfulness in the passage, betwixt ease and solemnity.

POPE JOURNEYING ON HORSEBACK BY MOONLIGHT.

"Nothing could have more of that melancholy which once used to please me than my last day's journey; for after having passed through my favourite woods in the forest, with a thou-

sand reveries of past pleasure, I rode over hanging hills, whose tops were edged with groves, and whose feet watered with winding rivers, listening to the falls of cataracts below, and the murmuring of the winds above; the gloomy verdure of Stonor succeeded to these, and then the shades of the evening overtook me. The moon rose in the clearest sky I ever saw, by whose solemn light I paced on slowly without company, or any interruption to the range of my thoughts. About a mile before I reached Oxford, all the bells tolled in different notes, and the clocks of every college answered one another, and sounded forth, some in a deeper, some in a softer tone, that it was eleven at night. All this was no ill preparation to the life I have led since, among those old walls, venerable galleries, stone porticos, studious walks, and solitary scenes of the university. I wanted nothing but a black gown and a salary, to be as mere a bookworm as any there. I conformed myself to the college hours—was rolled up in books—lay in one of the most ancient dusky parts of the university—and was as dead to the world as any hermit of the desert. If anything was alive or awake in me, it was a little vanity, such as even those good men used to entertain when the monks of their own order extolled their piety and abstraction; for I found myself received with a sort of respect which this idle part of mankind, the learned, pay to their species, who are as considerable here as the busy, the gay, and the ambitious are in your world."

In the letter containing this extract, is one of those touching passages we have mentioned, in which he alludes to his personal deformity.

"Here, at my Lord H——'s (Harcourt's?), I see a creature nearer an angel than a woman (though a woman be very near as good as an angel). I think you have formerly heard me mention Mrs. T—— as a credit to the maker of angels; she is a relation of his lordship's, and he gravely proposed her to me

for a wife. Being tender of her interests, and knowing that she is less indebted to fortune than I, I told him, 't was what he could never have thought of, if it had not been his misfortune to be blind, and what I could never think of, while I had eyes to see both her and myself."

This is one of those rare occasions in which the most artificial turn of language, if gracefully put, is not unsuitable to the greatest depth of feeling, the speaker being taxed, as it were, to use his utmost address, both for his own sake and the lady's. We speak of "deformity" in reference to Pope's figure, since, undoubtedly, the term is properly applied; and one of the greatest compliments that can be paid his memory (which may be sincerely done), is to think that a woman could really have loved him. But he had wit, fancy, sensibility, fame, and the "finest eyes in the world;" and he would have worshipped her with so much gratitude, and filled her moments with so much intellectual entertainment, that we can believe a woman to have been very capable of a serious passion for him, especially if she was a very good and clever woman. As to minor faults of shape, even of his own sort, we take them to be nothing whatsoever in the way of such love. We have seen them embodying the finest minds and most generous hearts; and believe, indeed, that a woman is in luck who has the wit to discern their lovability; for it begets her a like affection, and shows that her own nature is worthy of it.

This volume of Letters is the one that was occasioned by the surreptitious collection published by Curll. It contains the correspondence with Walsh, Wycherley, Trumbal, and Cromwell, those to "Several Ladies," to Edward Blount, and Gay, &c. The style is generally artificial, sometimes provokingly so, as in the answer to Sir William Trumbal's hearty and natural congratulations on the "Rape of the Lock." It vexes one to see so fine a poet make such an owl of himself with his laboured deprecations of flattery (of which there was none), and self-exaltations above the love of fame. The honest old statesman (a delightful character by the way, and not so rare as inexperience fancies it) must have smiled at the unconscious insincerity of his little great friend. "Unconscious" we say, for it is a mistake to conclude that an insincerity of this kind may not have a great deal of truth in it, as regards the writer's own mind and intentions; and Pope, at the time, had not lived long enough to become aware of his weakness in this respect; perhaps never did. On the other hand, there are abundant proofs in these Letters of the best kind of sincerity, and of the most exquisite good sense. Pope's heart and purse (which he could moderately afford) *were* ever open to his friends, let his assertions to that effect be taken by a shallow and envious cunning in as much evidence to the contrary as it pleases. He was manifestly kind to every body in every respect, except when they provoked his wit and self-love a

little too far; and then only, or chiefly, as it affected him publicly. He had little tricks of management, we dare say; *that* must be an indulgence conceded to his little crazy body, and his fear of being jostled aside by robuster exaction; and we will not swear that he was never disingenuous before those whom he had attacked. *That* may have been partly owing to his very kindness, uneasy at seeing the great pain which he had given; for his satire was bred in him by *reading* satire (Horace, Boileau, and others); and it was doubtless more bent on being admired for its wit than feared for its severity, exquisitely severe though he could be, and pleased as a man of so feeble a body *must* have been at seeing his pen so formidable. He fondly loved his friends. We see by this book, that before he was six and twenty, he had painted Swift's portrait (for he dabbled in oil painting) three times; and he was always wishing Gay to come and live with him, doubtless at his expense. He said on one of these occasions, "Talk not of expenses; Homer (that is, his translation) will support his children." And when Gay was in a bad state of health, and might be thought in want of a better air, Pope told him he would go with him to the south of France; a journey which, for so infirm and habitual a homester, would have been little less, than if an invalid nowadays should propose to go and live with his friend in South America.

There are some passages in this volume so curi-

ously applicable to the state of things now existing among us,* that we are tempted to quote one or two of them:—

"I am sure (says he) if all Whigs and all Tories had the spirit of one Roman Catholic I know (his friend Edward Blount, to whom he is writing), it would be well for all Roman Catholics; and if all Roman Catholics had always had that spirit, it had been well for all others, and we had never been charged with so wicked a spirit as that of persecution."

Again, in a letter to Craggs,—

"I took occasion to mention the superstition of some ages after the subversion of the Roman empire, which is too manifest a truth to be denied, *and does in no sort reflect upon the present professors of our faith* (he was himself a Catholic) *who are free from it.* Our silence in these points may, with some reason, make our adversaries think we allow and persist in those bigotries, *which yet, in reality, all good and sensible men despise,* though they are persuaded not to speak against them; I cannot tell why, since now it is no way the interest even of the worst of our priesthood, as it might have been then, to have them smothered in silence."

Let the above be the answer to those who pretend to think that the Catholics are still as ignorant and bigoted as they were in the days of Queen Mary!—as though such enlightened Catholics as Pope, and such revolting ones as Mary herself, had never assisted to bring them to a better way of thinking.

For the exquisite good sense we have spoken of,

* 1838.

take the following passage, which is a masterpiece:—

"Nothing hinders the constant agreement of people who live together but mere vanity: a secret insisting upon what they think their dignity or merit, and inward expectation of such an over-measure of deference and regard as answers to their own extravagant false scale, and which nobody can pay, because none but themselves can tell readily to what pitch it amounts."

Thousands of houses would be happy to-morrow if this passage were written in letters of gold over the mantel-piece, and the offenders could have the courage to apply it to themselves.

We shall conclude this article with an observation or two, occasioned by a *rondeau* in the volume, not otherwise very mentionable. The first is, that in its time, and till lately, it was almost the only rondeau, we believe, existing in the language, certainly the only one that had attracted notice; secondly, that it does not obey the laws of construction laid down by the example of Marot, and pleasantly set forth of late in a publication on "*Rondeaulx*," (pray pronounce the word in good honest old French, with the *eaulx*, like the beating up of eggs for a pudding); third, that owing to the lesser animal spirits prevailing in this country, the larger form of the rondeau is not soon likely to obtain; fourth, that in a smaller and more off-hand shape it seems to us deserving of revival, and extremely well calculated to give effect to such an impulse as naturally inclines us to the repetition of

two or three words; and fifth and last, that as love sometimes makes people imprudent, and gets them excused for it, so this loving perusal of Pope and his volume has tempted us to publish a rondeau of our own, which was written on a real occasion, and therefore may be presumed to have had the aforesaid impulse. We must add, lest our egotism should be thought still greater on the occasion than it is, that the lady was a great lover of books and impulsive writers: and that it was our sincerity as one of them which obtained for us this delightful compliment from a young enthusiast to an old one.

"Jenny kiss'd me when we met,
Jumping from the chair she sat in;
Time, you thief! who love to get
Sweets into your list, put *that* in.
Say I 'm weary, say I 'm sad,
Say that health and wealth have miss'd me,
Say I 'm growing old, but add,
Jenny kiss'd me."

GARTH, PHYSICIANS, AND LOVE-LETTERS.

Garth, and a Dedication to him by Steele.—Garth, Pope, and Arbuthnot.—Other physicians in connexion with wit and literature.—Desirableness of a selection from the less-known works of Steele, and of a collection of real Love-Letters.—Two beautiful specimens from the "Lover."

We never cast our eyes towards "Harrow on the Hill" (let us keep these picturesque denominations of places as long as we can) without thinking of an amiable man and most pleasant wit and physician of Queen Anne's time, who lies buried there,—Garth, the author of the "Dispensary." He was the Whig physician of the men of letters of that day, as Arbuthnot was the Tory: and never were two better men sent to console the ailments of two witty parties, or show them what a nothing party is, compared with the humanity remaining under the quarrels of both.

We are not going to repeat what has been said of Garth so often before us. Our chief object, as far as regards himself, is to lay before the reader some

passages of a Dedication which appears to have escaped notice, and which beautifully enlarges upon that professional generosity which obtained him the love of all parties, and the immortal panegyrics of Dryden and Pope. It is by Sir Richard Steele, and is written as none but a congenial spirit could write, in love with the same virtues, and accustomed to the consolation derived from them.

To Sir Samuel Garth, M.D.

"Sir,

"As soon as I thought of making the *Lover* a present to one of my friends, I resolved, without further distracting my choice, to send it *to the Best Natured-Man.* You are so universally known for this character, that an epistle so directed would find its way to you without your name; *and I believe nobody but you yourself would deliver such a superscription to any other person.*

"This propensity is the nearest akin to love; and good nature is the worthiest affection of the mind, as love is the noblest passion of it. While the latter is wholly occupied in endeavouring to make happy one single object, the other diffuses its benevolence to all the world.

* * * * *

"The pitiful artifices which empyrics are guilty of to drain cash out of valetudinarians, are the abhorrence of your generous mind; and it is as common with Garth to supply indigent patients with money for food, as to receive it from wealthy ones for physic.

* * * * *

"This tenderness interrupts the satisfactions of conversation, to which you are so happily turned; but we forgive you that our mirth is often insipid to you, *while you sit absent to what*

passes amongst us, from your care of such as languish in sickness. We are sensible that their distresses, instead of being removed by company, return more strongly to your imagination, by comparison of their condition to the jollities of health.

"But I forget I am writing a dedication," &c. &c. &c.

This picture of a man sitting silent, on account of his sympathies with the absent, in the midst of such conversation as he was famous for excelling in, is very interesting, and comes home to us as if we were in his company. Who will wonder that Pope should write of Garth as he did?

"Farewell, Arbuthnot's raillery
On every learned sot;
And Garth, the best good Christian he,
Although he knows it not."

This exquisite compliment to Garth has been often noticed, as at once confirming the scepticism attributed to him, and vindicating the Christian spirit with which it was accompanied. But it has not been remarked, that Pope, with a further delicacy, highly creditable to all parties, has here celebrated, in one and the same stanza, his Tory and his Whig medical friend. The delicacy is carried to its utmost towards Arbuthnot also, when we consider that that learned wit had the reputation of being as orthodox a Christian in belief as in practice. The modesty of his charity is thus taxed to its height, and therefore as highly complimented, by the excessive praise bestowed on the Christian spirit of the rival wit, Whig, and physician.

The intercourse in all ages, between men of letters and lettered physicians is one of the most pleasing subjects of contemplation in the history of authorship. The necessity (sometimes of every description) on one side, the balm afforded on the other, the perfect mutual understanding, the wit, the elegance, the genius, the masculine gentleness, the honour mutually done and received, and not seldom the consciousness that friendships so begun will be recognised and loved by posterity,—all combine to give it a very peculiar character of tender and elevated humanity, and to make us, the spectators, look on, with an interest partaking of the gratitude. If it had not been for Arbuthnot, posterity might have been deprived of a great deal of Pope.

> "Friend to my life, which did not you prolong,
> The world had wanted many an idle song;"

says he, in his Epistle to the Doctor. And Dryden, in the "Postscript" to his translation of "Virgil," speaks, in a similar way, of his medical friends, and of the whole profession:—

> "That I have recovered, in some measure, the health which I had lost by too much application to this work, is owing, next to God's mercy, to the skill and care of Dr. Guibbons and Dr. Hobbs, the two ornaments of their profession, whom I can only pay by this acknowledgment. The whole faculty has always been ready to oblige me."

Pope again, in a letter to his friend Allen, a few

weeks before he died, pays the like general compliment:—

"There is no end of my kind treatment from the faculty. They are, in general, the most amiable companions, and the best friends, as well as most learned men I know."

We are sorry we cannot quote a similar testimony from Johnson, in one of his very best passages; but we have not his "Lives of the Poets" at hand, and cannot find it in any similar book. It was to Johnson that Dr. Brocklesby offered not only apartments in his house, but an annuity; and the same amiable man is known to have given a considerable sum of money to his friend Burke. The extension of obligations of this latter kind is, for many obvious reasons, not to be desired. The necessity on the one side must be of as peculiar and, so to speak, of as noble a kind as the generosity on the other; and special care would be taken by a necessity of that kind, that the generosity should be equalled by the means. But where the circumstances have occurred, it is delightful to record them. And we have no doubt, that in proportion to the eminence of physicians' names in the connection of their art with other liberal studies, the records would be found numerous with *all*, if we had the luck to discover them. There is not a medical name connected with literature, which is not that of a generous man in regard to money matters, and, commonly speaking, in all others. Blackmore himself, however dull as a poet and pedantic as a moralist,

enjoyed, we believe, the usual reputation of the faculty for benevolence. We know not whether Cowley is to be mentioned among the physicians who have taken their degrees in wit or poetry, for perhaps he never practised. But the annals of our minor poetry abound in medical names, all of them eminent for kindness. Arbuthnot, as well as Garth, wrote verses, and no feeble ones either, as may be seen by a composition of his in the first volume of "Dodsley's Collection," entitled "Know Thyself." Akenside was a physician; Armstrong, Goldsmith, and Smollett were physicians; Dr. Cotton, poor Cowper's friend, author of the "Visions," was another; and so was Grainger, the translator of "Tibullus," who wrote the thoughtful "Ode on Solitude," and the beautiful ballad entitled "Bryan and Pereene." Percy (who inserted the ballad with more feeling than propriety in his "Reliques of *Ancient* English Poetry") says of Grainger, that he was "one of the most friendly, generous, and benevolent men he ever knew." Goldsmith, even in his own poverty, was known to have given guineas to the poor, by way of prescriptions; and when he died, his staircase in the Temple was beset by a crowd of mourners out of Fleet-street, such as Dives in his prosperity would sooner have laughed at, than Lazarus would, or Mary Magdalen. Smollett had his full portion of generosity in money matters, though he does not appear to have possessed so much of the customary delicacy; otherwise he never would have given "os-

tentatious" Sunday dinners to poor authors, upon whose heads he took the opportunity of cracking sarcastic jokes! But he was a diseased subject, and probably had a blood as bad as his heart was good. Of Armstrong and Akenside we are not aware that any particular instances of generosity have been recorded, but they both had the usual reputation for benevolence, and wrote of it as if they deserved it. Akenside also excited the enthusiastic generosity of a friend; which an ungenerous man is not likely to do, though undoubtedly it is possible he might, considering the warmth of the heart in which it is excited. The debt of scholarship and friendship to the profession was handsomely acknowledged in his instance by the affection of Dyson, who, when Akenside was commencing practice, assisted him with three hundred a year. That was the most magnificent *fee* ever given!

We know not, indeed, who is calculated to excite a liberal enthusiasm, if a liberal physician is not. There is not a fine corner in the mind and heart to which he does not appeal; and in relieving the frame, he is too often the only means of making virtue itself comfortable. The physician is well-educated, well-bred, has been accustomed to the infirmities of his fellow-creatures, therefore understands how much there is in them to be excused as well as relieved; his manners are rendered soft by the gentleness required in sick-rooms; he learns a Shakspearian value for a smile and a jest, by know-

ing how grateful to suffering is the smallest drop of balm; and the whole circle of his feelings and his knowledge (generally of his success too, but that is not necessary) gives him a sort of divine superiority to the mercenary disgracers of his profession. There are pretenders and quacks, and foolish favourites in this as in all professions, and the world may occasionally be startled by discovering that there is such a phenomenon as a physician at once skilful and mean, eminent and selfish. But the ordinary jests on the profession are never echoed with greater good-will than by those who do not deserve them; and to complete the merit of the real physician,—of the man whose heart and behaviour do good, as well as his prescriptions,—he possesses that humility in his knowledge which candidly owns the limit of it, and which is at once the proudest, most modest, and most engaging proof of his attainments, because it shows that what he does know he knows truly, and that he holds brotherhood with the least instructed of his fellow-creatures.

It is a pity that some one, who loves the literature of the age of Queen Anne, and the sprightly fathers of English essay-writing, does not make a selection from the numerous smaller periodical works which were set up by Steele, and which in some instances were carried on but to a few numbers,—such as this of the "Lover" above mentioned, the "Spinster," the "Theatre," &c. They were generally, it is true, the offspring of haste and necessity; but the ne-

cessity was that of a genius full of wit and readiness; and a small volume of the kind, prefaced with some hearty semibiographical retrospect of the man and his writings, would really, we believe, contain as good a specimen of the *volatile extract of Steele* (if the reader will allow us what *seems* a pun) as of his finest *second-best* papers out of the Tatler. We speak, we must own, chiefly from a knowledge of the "Lover," never having even seen some of the others; which is another reason for conjecturing that such a volume might be acceptable to many who are acquainted with his principal works.

But there is another volume which has long been suggested to us by the "Lover," and which would surpass in interest whatever might be thus collected out of the whole literature of that day; and that is (we here make a present of the suggestion to any one who has as much love, and more time for the work than we have) a *Collection of Genuine Love-Letters;* not such stuff as Mrs. Behn and others have given to the world, but genuine in every sense of the word,—authentic, well written, and full of heart. Even those in which the heart is not so abundant, but in which it is yet to be found, elevating gallantry into its sphere, might be admitted; such as one or two of Pope's to Lady Mary, and a pleasant one (if our memory does not deceive us) of Congreve's to Arabella Hunt the singer. Eloisa's should be there by all means (not Abelard's, except by way of note or so, for they are far inferior; as he

himself was a far inferior person, and had little or no love in him except that of having his way). Those of Lady Temple to Sir William, when she was Miss Osborne, should not be absent. Steele himself would furnish some charming ones of the lighter sort (with heart enough too in them for half a dozen grave people; more, we fear, than "dear Prue" had to give him in return). There would be several, deeply affecting, out of the annals of civil and religious strife; and the collection might be brought up to our own time, by some of those extraordinary outpourings of a mind remarkable for the prematurity as well as abundance of its passion and imagination, in the correspondence of Goëthe with Bettina Brentano, who, in the words of Shelley, may truly be called a "child of love and light." * The most agreeable of metaphysicians, Abraham Tucker, author of the "Light of Nature Pursued," collected, and copied out in two manuscript volumes, the letters which had passed between himself and a beloved wife, "whenever they happened to be absent from each other," under the title of a "Picture of Artless Love." He used to read them to his daughters. These manuscripts ought to be extant somewhere, for he died only in the year 1744, and he gave one of them to her father's family, while the other was most likely retained as an heir-loom.

* See the two volumes from the German, not long since published, under the title of "Goëthe's Correspondence with a Child."

in his own, which became merged into that of Mildmay. The whole book would most likely be welcome to the reading world; but at all events some extracts from it could hardly fail to enrich the collection we have been recommending.

We will here give out of the "Lover" itself, and as a sample both of that periodical of Steele's, and of the more tragical matter of what this volume of love-letters might consist of, two most exquisite specimens, which passed between a wife and her husband on the eve of the latter's death on the scaffold. He was one of the victims to sincerity of opinion during the civil wars; and the more sincere, doubtless, and public spirited, in proportion to his domestic tenderness; for private and public affection, in their noblest forms, are identical at the core. Two more truly loving hearts we never met with in book; nor such as to make us more impatiently desire that they had continued to live and bless one another. But there is a triumph in calamity itself, when so beautifully borne. Posterity takes such sufferers to its heart, and crowns them with its tears.

"There are very tender things," says Steele, "to be recited from the writings of poetical authors, which express the utmost tenderness in an amorous commerce; but, indeed, I never read anything which, to me, had so much nature and love, as an expression or two in the following letter. But the reader must be let into the circumstances of the

matter to have a right sense of it. The epistle was written by a gentlewoman to her husband, who was condemned to suffer death. The unfortunate catastrophe happened at Exeter in the time of the late rebellion. A gentleman, whose name was Penruddock, to whom the letter was written, was barbarously sentenced to die, without the least appearance of justice. He asserted the illegality of his enemies' proceedings, with a spirit worthy his innocence; and the night before his death his lady wrote to him the letter which I so much admire, and is as follows:—

MRS. PENRUDDOCK'S LAST LETTER TO HER HUSBAND.

"My dear Heart,

"My sad parting was so far from making me forget you, that I scarce thought upon myself since; but wholly upon you. Those dear embraces which I yet feel, and shall never lose, being the faithful testimonies of an indulgent husband, have charmed my soul to such a reverence of your remembrance, that were it possible, I would, with my own blood, cement your dead limbs to live again, and (with reverence) think it no sin to rob Heaven a little longer of a martyr. Oh! my dear, you must now pardon my passion, this being my last (oh, fatal word!) that ever you will receive from me; and know, that until the last minute that I can imagine you shall live, I shall sacrifice the prayers of a Christian, and the groans of an afflicted wife. And when you are not (which sure by sympathy I shall know), I shall wish my own dissolution with you, that so we may go hand in hand to heaven. 'T is too late to tell you what I have, or rather have not done for you; how been turned out of doors because I came to beg mercy; the Lord lay not your blood to their charge. I would fain discourse longer with you,

but dare not; passion begins to drown my reason, and will rob me of my *devoirs*, which is all I have left to serve you. Adieu, therefore, ten thousand times, my dearest dear; and since I must never see you more, take this prayer,—May your faith be so strengthened that your constancy may continue; and then I know Heaven will receive you; whither grief and love will in a short time (I hope) translate,

"My dear,

"Your sad, but constant wife, even to love your ashes when dead,

"ARUNDEL PENRUDDOCK.

"May the 3d, 1655, eleven o'clock at night. Your children beg your blessing, and present their duties to you."

"I do not know," resumes Steele, "that I ever read anything so affectionate as that line, *Those dear embraces which I yet feel.* Mr. Penruddock's answer has an equal tenderness, which I shall recite also, that the town may dispute, whether the man or the woman expressed themselves the more kindly; and strive to imitate them in less circumstances of distress; for from all no couple upon earth are exempt."

MR. PENRUDDOCK'S LAST LETTER TO HIS LADY.

"Dearest, best of Creatures!

"I had taken leave of the world when I received yours: it did at once recall my fondness to life, and enable me to resign it. As I am sure I shall leave none behind me like you, which weakens my resolution to part from you, so when I reflect I am going to a place where there are none but such as you, I recover my courage. But fondness breaks in upon me; and as I would not have my tears flow to-morrow, when your husband, and the father of our dear babes, is a public spectacle, do not think meanly of me, that I give way to grief now in private, when

I see my sand run so fast, and within a few hours I am to leave you helpless, and exposed to the merciless and insolent that have wrongfully put me to a shameless death, and will object the shame to my poor children. I thank you for all your goodness to me, and will endeavour so to die as to do nothing unworthy that virtue in which we have mutually supported each other, and for which I desire you not to repine that I am first to be rewarded, since you ever preferred me to yourself in all other things. Afford me, with cheerfulness, the precedence in this. I desire your prayers in the article of death; for my own will then be offered for you and yours.

"J. PENRUDDOCK."

Steele says nothing after this; and it is fit, on every account, to respect his silence.

COWLEY AND THOMSON.

Nature intended poetry as well as matter of fact.—Mysterious anecdote of Cowley.—Remarkable similarity between him and Thomson.—Their supposed difference (as Tory and Whig).—Thomson's behaviour to Lady Hertford.—His answer to the genius-starvation principle.—His letters to his friends, &c.

"Nec vos, dulcissima mundi
Nomina, vos, Musæ, libertas, otia, libri,
Hortique, sylvæque, animâ remanente relinquam."

"Nor by me e'er shall you,
You, of all names the sweetest and the best,
You, Muses, books, and liberty, and rest,
You, gardens, fields, and woods, forsaken be,
As long as life itself forsakes not me."

THESE verses, both the Latin and the translation, are from the pen of an excellent man, and a better poet than he has latterly been thought—Cowley. But how came he, among his "sweetest and best names," to omit *love?* to leave out all mention of the affections?

Thereby hangs an anecdote that shall be noticed presently. Meantime, with a protest against the omission, the verses make a good motto for this verse-loving paper, begun on a fine summer's morning, amidst books and flowers. Our position is not so lucky as Cowley's in respect to "woods," having nothing to boast of, in that matter, beyond the suburbanity of a few lime-trees, and the neighbourhood of Kensington-gardens; but this does not hinder us from loving woods with all our might, nay, aggravates the intensity of the passion. A like reason favours our yearning after "liberty" and "rest," and especially after "fields;" the brickmakers threatening to swallow up those which the nurserymen have left us.

Well! We always hope to live in the thick of all that we desire, some day; and, meantime, we do live there as well as imagination can contrive it; which she does in a better manner than is realized by many a possessor of oaks thick as his pericranium. A book, a picture, a memory, puts us, in the twinkling of an eye, in the midst of the most enchanting solitudes, reverend with ages, beautiful with lawns and deer, glancing with the lovely forms of nymphs. And it does not at all baulk us, when we look up and find ourselves sitting in a little room with a fire-place, and, perhaps, with some town-cry coming along the street. Your muffin-crier is a being as full of the romantic mystery of existence, as a Druid or an ancient Tuscan; and what would

books or pictures be, or cities themselves, without that *mind of man*, in the circuit of whose world the solitudes of poetry lie, as surely as the last Court Calendar does, or the traffic of Piccadilly. Do the "green" minds of the "knowing" fancy that Nature intended nothing to be made out of trees, but coach-wheels, and a park or so? Oh, they of little wit! Nature intended trees to do all that they *do* do; that is to help to furnish *poetry* for us as well as houses; to exist in the imagination as well as in Buckinghamshire; to

"Live in description, and look green in song."

Nature intended that there should be odes and epic poems, quite as much as that men in Bond-street should eat tartlets, or that there should be Howards, and Rothschilds. The Earl of Surrey would have told you so, who was himself a Howard, and who perished on the scaffold, while his poems have gone on, living and lasting. Nature's injunction was not only, "Let there be things tangible;" but "Let there be things also imaginable, fanciful, spiritual;" thoughts of fairies and elysiums; Arcadias two-fold, one in real Greece, and the other in fabulous; Cowleys and Miltons as well as Cromwells; immortal Shakspeares, as well as customs that would perish but for their notice.

Alas! "your poet," nevertheless, is not exempt from "your weakness," as Falstaff would have

phrased it. He occasionally undergoes a double portion, in the process of a sensibility which exists for our benefit; and good, innocent, sequestered Cowley, whose desires in things palpable appear to have been bounded by a walk in a wood, and a book under his arm, must have experienced some strange phases of suffering. Sprat says of him, that he was the "most amiable of mankind;" and yet it is reported, that in his latter days he could not endure the sight of a woman! that he would leave the room if one came into it!

Here is a case for the respectful consideration of the philosopher—the *medical*, we suspect.

The supposed reason is, that he had been disappointed in love, perhaps ill-treated. But in so gentle a mind as his, disappointment could hardly have taken the shape of resentment and incivility towards the whole sex. The probability is, that it was some morbid weakness. He should have out-walked and diverted it, instead of getting fat and looking at trees out of a window; he should have gone more to town and the play, or written more plays of his own, instead of relieving his morbidity with a bottle too much in company with his friend the Dean.

We suspect, however, from the portraits of Cowley, that his blood was not very healthy by nature. There is a young as well as an old portrait of him, by good artists, evident likenesses; and both of them have a puffy, unwholesome look; so that his flesh seems to have been an uncongenial habitation

for so sweet a soul. The sweeter it, for preserving its dulcitudes as it did.

This morbid temperament is, perhaps, the only difference in their natures between two men, in whom we shall proceed to notice what appears to us a remarkable similarity in every other respect, almost amounting to a sort of identity. It is like a metempsychosis without a form of change; or only with such as would naturally result from a difference of times. Cowley and Thomson were alike in their persons, their dispositions, and their fortunes. They were both fat men, not handsome; very amiable and sociable; no enemies to a bottle; taking interest both in politics and retirement; passionately fond of external nature, of fields, woods, gardens, &c.; bachelors,—in love, and disappointed; faulty in style, yet true poets in *themselves*, if not always the best in their writings, that is to say, seeing everything in its poetical light; childlike in their ways; and, finally, they were both made easy in their circumstances by the party whom they served; both went to live at a little distance from London, and on the banks of the Thames; and both died of a cold and fever, originating in a careless exposure to the weather, not without more than a suspicion of previous "jollification" with "the Dean" on Cowley's part, and great probability of a like vivacity on that of Thomson, who had been visiting his friends in London. Thomson could push the bottle like a regular *bon vivant:* and Cowley's death is attributed

to his having forgotten his proper bed, and slept in a field all night, in company with his reverend and jovial friend Sprat. Johnson says that, at Chertsey, the villagers talked of "the drunken Dean."

But in one respect, it may be alleged, Cowley and Thomson were different, and very different; for one was a Tory, and the other a Whig.

True,—nominally, and by the accident of education; that is to say, Cowley was brought up on the Tory side, and Thomson on the Whig; and loving their fathers and mothers and friends, and each seeing his cause in its best possible light, they naturally adhered to it, and tried to make others think as well of it as they did themselves. But the truth is, that neither of them was Whig or Tory, in the ordinary sense of the word. Cowley was no fonder of power in the understood Tory sense, than Thomson was of liberty in the restricted, unprospective sense of the partizans of King William. Cowley was for the *beau idéal* of Toryism; that is, for order and restraint, as being the only safeguards of liberty; and Thomson was for a liberty and freedom of service, the eventual realization of which would have satisfied the most romantic of Radicals. See his poems throughout, especially the one entitled "Liberty." Cowley never *vulgarised* about Cromwell, as it was the fashion for his party to do. He thought him a bad man, it is true, but also a great man; he said nobler things about him than any royalist of his day, except Andrew Marvel (if the latter is to be

called a royalist); and he was so free from a factious partiality, that in his comedy, "Cutter of Coleman-street," which he intended as a satire on the Puritans, he could not help seeing such fair play to all parties, that the irritated Tories pronounced it a satire on themselves. There are doubtless many such Tories still as Cowley, owing to the same predisposing circumstances of education and turn of mind—men who only see the cause in its graceful and poetical light—whose admiration of power takes it for granted that the power will be well exercised, and whose loyalty is an indulgence of the disposition to personal attachment. But if education had given the sympathies of these men their natural tendency to expand, they would have been on the anti-Tory side; just as many a pretended lover of liberty (whom you may know by his arrogance, ill-nature, or other want of sympathy) has no business on the Whig or Radical side, but ought to proclaim himself what he is,—a Tory. Had Thomson, in short, lived in Cowley's time, and had a royalist to his father, the same affections that made him a Whig in the time of George the Second, would have made him just the sort of Tory that Cowley was during the Restoration; and had Cowley had a Whig for his father, and lived in the little Court of Frederick Prince of Wales, he would have been just the same sort of Whig politician as Thomson; for it was rather personal than political friendship that procured Cowley his ease at

last; and Frederick, Prince of Wales, was mean enough to take back the pension he had given Thomson, because his Highness had become offended with the poet's friend, Lyttleton. Such is the completion of the remarkable likeness in character and fortunes between these two excellent men.

Nor is the *spirit* of the similarity injured by the fault of the one as a writer consisting in what are called *conceits*, and that of the other in turgidity; for neither of the faults touched the heart of the writers, while both originated in the very humility and simplicity of the men, and in that disposition to admire others which is most dangerous to the most ingenious though not to the greatest men. Cowley and Thomson both fancied their own natural language not great enough for their subjects; and Cowley, in the wit which he found in fashion, and Thomson, in the Latin classics which were the favourites of the more sequestered world of his youth, thought he had found a style which, while it endeared him to those whom he most regarded among the living, would, by the very help of their sanction, secure him with the ages to come.

We will conclude this article with a few notes suggested by the latest edition of Thomson (Pickering's), by far the fullest of any, and containing letters and early poems never before published.

"Thomson," observes his new biographer, in this edition, "was one summer the guest of Lady Hertford at her country seat; but Johnson says, he

took more pleasure in carousing with her lord than in assisting her studies, and therefore was never again invited—a charge which Lord Buchan eagerly repels, but upon as little authority as it was originally made."

Now this charge is in all probability true; and what does it amount to? Not to anything that the noble critic need have been eager to repel. It was impossible for Thomson to treat Lady Hertford unkindly; but nothing is more probable than that he was puzzled with her "studies," whereas he knew well what to do with her husband's wine; and hence may have arisen a dilemma. The mistake was in good Lady Hertford's dignifying her innocent literary whims with the name of "studies," and thinking there was anything on the critic's part to "study" in them.

In the following happy passage Thomson has completely refuted the argument of those mechanical and not very humane or modest understandings, who, because they will only work for "a consideration" themselves, and feel that without restrictions upon them they would possibly burst out of bounds and do nothing, tell us that the only way to get works of genius done by men of genius is to keep them half-starved, and so force them. The mistake arises from their knowing nothing of the nature of genius; which is a thing that can no more help venting what fills and agitates it, than the flower can help secreting honey, or than light, as Thomson says

can help shining. For "genius" read "mechanical talent" like their own, and there might be something to say for their argument, if cruelty were not always a bad argument, and the harm done to the human spirit by it not to be risked for any imaginary result of good.

"What you observe concerning the pursuit of poetry, so far engaged in it as I am, is certainly just. Besides, *let him quit it who can*, and 'erit mihi magnus Apollo,' or something as great. *A true genius, like light, must be beaming forth*, as a false one is an incurable disease. One would not, however, climb Parnassus, any more than your mortal hills, to fix for ever on the barren top. No; it is some little dear retirement in the vale below that gives the right relish to the prospect, which, without that, is nothing but enchantment; and, though pleasing for some time, at last leaves us in a desert. The great fat doctor of Bath * told me that poets should be kept poor, the more to animate their genius. This is like the cruel custom of putting a bird's eyes out that it may sing the sweeter; *but, surely, they sing sweetest amidst the luxuriant woods, while the full spring blooms around them.*"

The last biographer of Thomson does not seem to have thought it necessary to enter into any niceties of judgment on various points that come under his notice. He gives an anecdote that was new to us, respecting Allan Ramsay's "Gentle Shepherd," but leaves the degree of credit belonging to it to be determined by the reader.

"About thirty years ago," says the story, "there was a

* Probably Cheyne.

respectable old man of the name of John Steel, who was well acquainted with Allan Ramsay; and he told John Steel himself, that when Mr. Thomson, the author of 'The Seasons,' was in his shop at Edinburgh, getting himself shaven, Ramsay was repeating some of his poems. Mr. Thomson says to him, 'I have something to emit to the world, but I do not wish to father it.' Ramsay asked what he would give him, and he would father it. Mr. Thomson replied, all the profit that arose from the publication. 'A bargain be it,' said Ramsay. Mr. Thomson delivered him the manuscript. So, from what is said above, Mr. Thomson, the author of 'The Seasons,' is the author of 'The Gentle Shepherd,' and Allan Ramsay is the father of it. This, I believe, is the truth."

There is not a trace of resemblance to Thomson's style in the "Gentle Shepherd." It is far more natural and off-hand; though none of its flights are so high, nor would you say that the poet (however charming—and he is so) is capable of such fine things as Thomson. And then the politics are Tory! These tales originate in mere foolish envy.

The biographer gives an opinion respecting Thomson's letters, which appears to us the reverse of being well founded: and he adds a reason for it, very little characteristic surely of so modest and single-hearted a man as the poet, who would never have been hindered from writing to a friend, merely because he thought he did not excel in letter-writing. "It must be evident," says he, "from the letters in this memoir, that Thomson did not excel in correspondence; and his dislike to writing letters, which was very great, may have been either the cause or

effect of his being inferior in this respect to other poets of the last century."

His dislike to writing was pure indolence. He reposed upon the confidence which his friends had in his affection, secure of their pardon for his not writing. When any particular good was to be done, he could write fast enough; and he always wrote well enough. We have just given a specimen; and here follow a few more bits out of the very same collection existing, which are at once natural and new enough to show how rich, in fact, the letters are, and what a pity it is he did not write more.

Speaking of a little sum (12*l.*) which he wished to borrow of a friend to help a sister in business, he says—

"I will not draw upon you, in case you be not prepared to defend yourself; but if your purse be *valiant*, please to inquire for Jean or Elizabeth Thomson, at the Rev. Mr. Gusthart's; and if this letter be not a sufficient testimony of the debt, I will send you whatever you desire.

"It is late, and I would not lose this post; like a laconic man of business, therefore, I must here stop short; though I have several things to impart to you, through your canal,* to the dearest, truest-hearted youth that treads on Scottish ground. The next letter I write you shall be washed clean from business in the Castalian fountain.

"I am whipping and spurring to finish a tragedy for you this winter, but am still at some distance from the goal, which makes me fear being distanced. Remember me to all friends; and,

* Channel. "Canal," I presume, was a Scotticism.

above them all, to Mr. Forbes. Though my affection to him is not *fanned* by letters, yet is it as high as when I was his brother in the *vertù*, and played at chess with him in a post-chaise."

To the same.—"Petty" (that is, Dr. Patrick Murdoch, the "little round, fat, oily man of God" in the Castle of Indolence) "came here two or three days ago; I have not yet seen the round man of God to be. He is to be parsonified a few days hence: how a gown and cassock will become him! and with what a holy leer he will edify the devout females! There is no doubt of his having a call, for he is immediately to enter upon a tolerable living. God grant him more, and as fat as himself. It rejoices me to see one worthy, honest, excellent man, raised, at least, to independence."

To Doctor Cranston.—"My spirits have gotten such a serious turn by these reflections, that, although I be thinking on Misjohn, I declare I shall hardly force a laugh before we part; for this, I think, will be my last letter from Edinburgh, for I expect to sail every day. Well, since I was speaking of that merry soul, I hope he is as bright, as easy, as *dégagé*, as susceptible of an intense laugh as he used to be; tell him, when you see him, that I laugh, in imagination, with him;—ha, ha, ha!"

To Mr. Patteson (his deputy in the Inspector-Generalship of the Leeward Island, and one of the friends whom he describes in the Castle of Indolence).—"I must recommend to your favour and protection Mr. James Smith, searcher in St. Christopher's; and I beg of you, as occasion shall serve, and as you find he merits it, to advance him in the business of the customs. He is warmly recommended to me by Sargent, who, in verity, turns out one of the best men of our youthful acquaintance—honest, honourable, friendly, and generous. If we are not to oblige one another, life becomes a paltry, selfish affair, *a pitiful morsel in a corner.*"

We hope that "here be proofs" of Thomson's having been as sincerely cordial, and even eloquent in his letters, as in his other writings. They have, it is true, in other passages, a little of the higher and more elaborate tone of his poetry, but only just enough to show how customary the tone was to him in his most serious moments, and therefore an interesting evidence of *the sort of complexional nature there was in his very art*—something analogous to his big, honest, unwieldy body; "more fat," to use his own words, "than bard beseem'd," but with a heart inside it for everything good and graceful.

BOOKSTALLS AND "GALATEO."

Beneficence of Bookstalls.—"Galateo, or a Treatise on Politeness."—Swift.—Ill-breeding of Fashion.—Curious instance of Italian delicacy of reproof.

GREAT and liberal is the magic of the bookstalls; truly deserved is the title of cheap shops. Your second-hand bookseller is second to none in the worth of the treasure which he dispenses; far superior to most; and infinitely superior in the modest profits he is content with. So much so, that one really feels ashamed sometimes to pay him such nothings for his goods. In some instances (for it is not the case with every one) he condescends even to expect to be "beaten down" in the price he charges, petty as it is; and accordingly, he is good enough to ask more than he will take, as though he did nothing but refine upon the pleasures of the purchaser. Not content with valuing knowledge and delight at a comparative nothing, he takes ingenious steps to make even that nothing less; and under the guise of a petty struggle to the contrary (as if to give you an agreeable sense of your energies) seems

dissatisfied unless he can send you away thrice blessed,—blessed with the book, blessed with the cheapness of it, and blessed with the advantage you have had over him in making the cheapness cheaper. Truly, we fear that out of a false shame we have too often defrauded our second-hand friend of the generous self-denial he is thus prepared to exercise in our favour; and by giving him the price set down in his catalogue, left him with impressions to our disadvantage.

And yet who can see treasures of wisdom and beauty going for a price which seems utterly unworthy of them, and stand haggling, with any comfort, for a sixpence or threepence more or less; doubting whether the merits of Shakspeare or Spenser can bear the weight of another fourpenny piece; or whether the volume that Alexander the Great put into a precious casket, has a right to be estimated at the value of a box of wafers?

To be serious;—they who can afford to give a second-hand bookseller what he asks in his catalogue, may in general do it with good reason, as well as a safe conscience. He is one of an anxious and industrious class of men compelled to begin the world with laying out ready money and living very closely: and if he prospers, the commodities and people he is conversant with, encourage the good impressions with which he set out, and generally end in procuring him a reputation for liberality as well as acuteness.

Now observe. Not long since, we picked up, within a short interval of each other, and for eighteen pence, versions of the two most famous books of instruction in polite manners, that Italy, their first Christian teacher, refined the world with;—the 'Courtier' of Count Baldassare Castiglione (Raphael's friend), for a shilling; and the 'Galateo' of Giovanni della Casa, Archbishop of Benevento (who wrote the banter on the name of John, which is translated in a certain volume of poems) for sixpence. The former we may perhaps give an account of another time. It is a book of greater pretensions, and embracing wider and more general considerations than 'Galateo;' which chiefly concerns itself with what is decorous and graceful in points more immediately relating to the person and presence. Some of these would be held of a trifling, and others of a coarse nature in the present day, when we are reaping the benefit of treatises of this kind; and the translator, in his notes, has shown an unseasonable disposition to extract amusement from that which the more gentlemanlike author feels bound but not willing to notice. Casa indeed, before he became a bishop, had not always been decent in his other works; and it is curious to observe that these public teachers of decorum, who do not avoid, if they do not seek, subjects of an unpleasant nature, have generally been less nice in their own practice, than they might have been. Chesterfield himself was a man of no very refined imagination, and Swift is proverbially coarse.

Swift indeed has said, that "a nice man is a man of nasty ideas," which may be true of some kinds of nice men, but is certainly not of all. The difference depends upon whether the leading idea of a man's mind is deformity or beauty. A man undoubtedly may avoid what is unbecoming, from thinking too nicely of it; but in that case, the habitual idea is deformity. On the other hand, he may tend to the becoming out of such an habitual love of the beautiful, that the mind naturally adjusts itself to that side of things, without thinking of the other; just as some people affect grace, and others are graceful by a certain harmony of nature, moving their limbs properly without endeavouring to do so; or just as some people give money out of ostentation or for fear of being thought stingy, while others do it for the pure delight of giving. Swift might as well have said of these latter, that they were people of *penurious* ideas, as that all who love cleanness or decorum are people of nasty ones. The next step in logic would be, that a rose was only a rose, because it had an excessive tendency to be a thistle.

Poor, admirable, perplexing Swift, the mastermind of his age! He undid his own excuse, when he talked in this manner; for with all his faults (some of them accountable only from a perplexed brain) and with all which renders his writings in some respects so revolting, it might have been fancied that he made himself a sort of martyr to certain good intentions, if he had not taken these pains to

undo the supposition. And perhaps there was something of the kind, after all, in his heroical ventures upon the reader's disgust; though the habits of his contemporaries were not refined in this respect, and are therefore not favourable to the conclusion.

A thorough treatise on good manners would startle the readers of any generation, our own certainly not excepted; and partly for this reason, that out of the servility of a too great love of the prosperous we are always confounding fashion with good breeding; though no two things can in their nature be more different,—fashion going upon the ground of assumption and exclusiveness, and good-breeding on that of general benevolence. A fashionable man may indeed be well bred;—but it will go hard with him to be so and preserve his fashionableness. To take one instance out of a hundred:—there came up a *fashion* some time ago of confining the mutual introduction of a man's guests to the announcement of their names by a servant, on their entrance into the room; so that unless you came last, everybody else did not know who you were; and if you did, you yourself perhaps were not acquainted with the name of a single other person in the room. The consequence in a mixed party was obvious. Even the most tragical results might have taken place; and perhaps have so. We were present on one occasion, where some persons of different and warm political opinions were among the company, and it was the merest chance in the world that one of them was not

insulted by the person sitting next him, the conversation every instant tending to the subject of *ratting*, and some of the hearers sitting on thorns while it was going on. Now good breeding has been justly defined "the art of making those easy with whom you converse;" and here was a fashionable violation of it.*

We shall conclude this article with an extract of the most striking passage in the book before us. It is entitled 'Count Richard,' and is given as "an instance of delicate reproof." The reproof is delicate enough in some respects, and of a studied benevolence; but whether the delicacy is perfect, we shall inquire a little when we have repeated it. At all events, the account is singular and interesting, as a specimen of the highest ultra-manners of those times,—the sixteenth century.

"There was, some years ago, a Bishop of Verona, whose name was John Matthew Gilberto; a man deeply read in the Holy Scriptures, and thoroughly versed in all kinds of polite literature. This prelate, amongst many other laudable qualities, was a man of great elegance of manners, and of great generosity; and entertained those many gentlemen and people of fashion, who frequented his house, with the utmost hospitality,

* If it be too troublesome to the benevolence of fashionable society to introduce people to one another on these occasions *vivâ voce*, why not let the card of each person, on entering, be given to the servant, whose business it should be to put it in a rack for the purpose; so that at least it might be known who was in the room, and who not?

and (without transgressing the bounds of moderation) with such a decent magnificence, as became a man of his sacred character.

"It happened, then, that a certain nobleman, whom they called *Count Richard*, passing through Verona at that time, spent several days with the bishop and his family; in which every individual almost was distinguished by his learning and politeness. To whom, as this illustrious guest appeared particularly well bred, and every way agreeable, they were full of his encomiums; and would have esteemed him a most accomplished person, but that his behaviour was sullied with one trifling imperfection; which the prelate himself also, a man of great penetration, having observed, he communicated the affair, and canvassed it over with some of those with whom he was most intimate. Who, though they were unwilling to offend, on so trifling an occasion, a guest of such consequence, yet at length agreed that it was worth while to give the Count a hint of it in a friendly manner. When therefore the Count, intending to depart the next day, had, with a *good grace*, taken leave of the family, the Bishop sent for one of his most intimate friends, a man of great prudence and discretion, and gave him a strict charge, that, when the Count was now mounted, and going to enter upon his journey, he should wait on him part of the way, as a mark of respect; and, as they rode along, when he saw a convenient opportunity, he should signify to the Count, in as gentle and friendly a manner as possible, that which had before been agreed upon amongst themselves.

"Now this domestic of the Bishop's was a man of advanced age; of singular learning, uncommon politeness, and distinguished eloquence, and also of a sweet and insinuating address, who had himself spent a great part of his life in the courts of great princes; and was called, and perhaps is at this time called Galateo; at whose request, and by whose encouragement, I first engaged in writing this treatise.

"This gentleman, then, as he rode by the side of the Count,

on his departure, insensibly engaged him in a very agreeable conversation on various subjects. After chattering together very pleasantly, upon one thing after another, and it appearing now time for him to return to Verona, the Count began to insist upon his going back to his friends, and for that purpose he himself waited on him some little part of the way.—There, at length, Galateo, with an open and free air, and in the most obliging expressions, thus addressed the Count: 'My Lord,' says he, 'the Bishop of Verona, my master, returns you many thanks for the honour which you have done him: particularly that you did not disdain to take up your residence with him, and to make some little stay within the narrow confines of his humble habitation.

"'Moreover, as he is thoroughly sensible of the singular favour you have conferred upon him on this occasion, he has enjoined me, in return, to make you a tender of some favour on his part; and begs you, in a more particular manner, to accept cheerfully, and in good part, his intended kindness.

"'Now, my Lord, the favour is this: The Bishop, my master, esteems your Lordship as a person truly noble: so graceful in all your deportment, and so polite in your behaviour, that he hardly ever met with your equal in this respect; on which account has he studied your Lordship's character with a more than ordinary attention, and minutely scrutinized every part of it, he could not discover a single article which he did not judge to be extremely agreeable, and deserving of the highest encomiums. Nay, he would have thought your Lordship complete in every respect, without a single exception, but that in one particular action of yours, there appeared some little imperfection; which is, that when you are eating at table, the motion of your lips and mouth causes an uncommon smacking kind of a sound, which is rather offensive to those who have the honour to sit at table with you. This is what the good prelate wished to have your Lordship acquainted with; and entreats you, if it is in your power, carefully to correct this ungraceful

habit for the future; and that your Lordship would favourably accept this friendly admonition, as a particular mark of kindness; for the Bishop is thoroughly convinced, that there is not a man in the whole world, besides himself, who would have bestowed upon your Lordship a favour of this kind.'

"The Count, who had never before been made acquainted with this foible of his, on hearing himself thus taxed, as it were with a thing of this kind, blushed a little at first, but, soon recollecting himself, like a man of sense, thus answered: 'Pray sir, do me the favour to return my compliments to the Bishop, and tell his Lordship, that if the presents which people generally make to each other, were all of them such as his Lordship has made me, they would really be much richer than they now are. However, sir, I cannot but esteem myself greatly obliged to the Bishop for this polite instance of his kindness and friendship for me; and you may assure his Lordship, I will most undoubtedly use my utmost endeavours to correct this failing of mine for the future. In the mean time, sir, I take my leave of you, and wish you a safe and pleasant ride home.'"

The translator has the following note on this story:—

"It may be questioned, whether the freedom of an English University, where a man would be told of his foibles with an honest laugh, and a thump on the back, would not have shocked Count Richard less than this ceremonious management of the affair."—p. 23.

The virtue of the thump on the back would certainly depend on the honesty of the laugh; that is to say, on the real kindness of it, and the willingness of the laugher to undergo a similar admonition. But motives and results on these occasions are equally problematical; and upon the whole,

that sort of *manual* of politeness is not to be commended.

With regard to the exquisite delicacy of the admonisher of Count Richard, exquisite it was to a certain literal extent, and not without much that is spiritual. It was studied and elaborate enough; and above all, the adviser did not forget to dwell upon the good qualities of the person advised, and so make the fault as nothing in comparison. For as it has been well observed by a late philosopher (Godwin), that "advice is not disliked for its own sake, but because so few people know how to give it," so the ignorance generally shown by advisers consists in not taking care to do justice to the merits of the other party, and sheathing the wound to the self-love in all the balm possible. And it must be owned, that for the most part advisers are highly in want of advice themselves, and do but thrust their pragmatical egotism in the teeth of the vanity they are hurting. Now, without supposing that the exquisite Bishop and his messenger, who gave the advice to Count Richard, were not men of really good-breeding in most respects, or that the latter in particular did not deserve the encomiums bestowed on him by Monsignore della Casa, we venture, with infinite apologies and self-abasement before the elegant ghost of his memory, to think, that on the present occasion, he and his employer failed in one great point; to-wit, that of giving the Count to understand, that they themselves were persons who

failed, or in the course of their experience had failed, in some nice points of behaviour; otherwise (so we conceive they should have spoken) they would not have presumed to offer the benefit of that experience to so accomplished a gentleman. For we hold, that unless it is a father or mother, or some such person, whose motives are to be counted of superior privilege to all chance of being misconstrued or resented (and even then, the less the privilege is assumed the better), nobody has a right to advise another, or can give it without presumption, who is not prepared to consult the common right of all to a considerate, or rather what may be called an *equalizing*, treatment of their self-love; and as arrogant people are famous for the reverse of this delicacy, so it was an arrogation, though it did not imply habitual arrogance, in good Signor Galateo, to say not a syllable of his own defects, while pointing out one to his noble and most courteous guest.

BOOKBINDING AND "HELIODORUS."

A rapture to the memory of Mathias Corvinus, king and bookbinder.—Bookbinding good and bad.—Ethiopics of Heliodorus.—Striking account of raising a dead body.

GLORY be to the memory of Mathias Corvinus, king of Hungary and Bohemia, son of the great Huniades, and binder of books in vellum and gold. He placed fifty thousand volumes, says Warton, "in a tower which he had erected in the metropolis of Buda: and in this library he established thirty amanuenses, skilled in painting, illuminating, and writing, who under the conduct of Felix Ragusinus, a Dalmatian, consummately learned in the Greek, Chaldaic, and Arabic languages, and an elegant designer and painter of ornaments on vellum, attended incessantly to the business of transcription and decoration. The librarian was Bartholomew Fontius, a learned Florentine, the writer of many philological books, and a professor of Greek and oratory at Florence. When Buda was taken by the Turks in the year 1526, Cardinal Bozmanni offered, for the redemption

of this inestimable collection, two hundred thousand pieces of the imperial money: yet without effect; for the barbarous besiegers defaced or destroyed most of the books, in the violence of seizing the splendid covers and the silver bosses and clasps with which they were enriched. The learned Obsopaeus relates, that a book was brought him by an Hungarian soldier, which he had picked up with many others, in the pillage of King Corvino's library, and had preserved as a prize, merely because the covering retained some marks of gold and rich workmanship. This proved to be a manuscript of the Ethiopics of Heliodorus; from which in the year 1534, Obsopaeus printed at Basil the first edition of that elegant Greek romance."*

Methinks we see this tower,—doubtless in a garden,—the windows overlooking it, together with the vineyards which produced the Tokay that his majesty drank while reading, agreeably to the notions of his brother bookworm, the King of Arragon. The transcribers and binders are at work in various apartments below; midway is a bath, with an orangery;—and up aloft, but not too high to be above the tops of the trees through which he looks over the vineyards towards his beloved Greece and Italy, in a room tapestried with some fair story of Atalanta or the Golden Fleece, sits the king in a chair-couch, his legs thrown up and his face shaded from the sun, reading one of the passages we are

* "History of English Poetry." Edition of 1840, Vol. ii. p. 552.

about to extract from the romance of Heliodorus,—some illumination in which casts up a light on his manly beard, tinging its black with tawny.

What a fellow!—Think of being king of the realms of Tokay, and having a library of fifty thousand volumes in vellum and gold, with thirty people constantly beneath you, copying, painting, and illuminating, and every day sending you up a fresh one to look at!

We were going to say, that Dr. Dibdin should have existed in those days, and been his majesty's chaplain, or his confessor. But we doubt whether he could have borne the bliss. (*Vide* his ecstacies, *passim*, on the charms of vellums, tall copies, and blind tooling.) Yet, as confessor and patron, they would admirably have suited. The doctor would have continually absolved the king from the sin of thinking of his next box of books during sermon-time, or looking at the pictures in his missal instead of reading it; and the king would have been always bestowing benefices on the doctor, till the latter began to think he needed absolution himself.

Not being a king of Hungary, nor rich, nor having a confessor to absolve us from sins of expenditure, how lucky is it that we can take delight in books whose outsides are of the homeliest description! How willing are we to waive the grandeur of outlay! how contented to pay for some precious volume a shilling instead of two pounds ten! Bind we would, if we could:—there is no doubt of that.

We should have liked to challenge the majesty of Hungary to a bout at bookbinding, and seen which would have ordered the most intense and ravishing *legatura;* something, at which De Seuil, or Grollier himself, should have—

"Sigh'd, and look'd, and sigh'd again;"—

something which would have made him own, that there was nothing between it and an angel's wing. Meantime, nothing comes amiss to us but dirt, or tatters, or cold, plain, calf, *school* binding,—a thing which we hate for its insipidity and formality, and for its attempting to do the business as cheaply and *usefully* as possible, with no regard to the liberality and picturesqueness befitting the cultivators of the generous infant mind.

Keep from our sight all *Selectæ e Profanis*, and *Enfield's Speakers*, bound in this manner; and especially all Ovids, and all *Excerpta* from the Greek. We would as lief see Ovid come to life in the dress of a quaker, or Theocritus serving in a stationer's shop. (See the horrid, impossible dreams, which such incoherences excite!) Arithmetical books are not so bad in it; and it does very well for the *Gauger's Vade Mecum*, or tall thin copies of *Logarithms;* but for anything poetical, or of a handsome universality like the grass or the skies, we would as soon see a flower whitewashed, or an arbour fit for an angel converted into a pew.

But to come to the book before us. See what an

advantage the poor reader of modern times possesses over the royal collector of those ages, who doubtless got his manuscript of Heliodorus's romance at a cost and trouble proportionate to the splendour he bestowed on its binding. An "argosie" brought it him from Greece or Italy, at a price rated by some Jew of Malta: or else his father got it with battle and murder out of some Greek ransom of a Turk; whereas we bought our copy at a bookstall in Little Chelsea for *tenpence!* To be sure it is not in the original language; nor did we ever read it in that language; neither is the translation, for the most part, a good one; and it is execrably printed. It is "done," half by a "person of quality," and half by Nahum Tate. There are symptoms of its being translated from an Italian version; and perhaps the good bits come out of an older English one, mentioned by Warton.

The *Œthiopics* or *Œthiopian History* of Heliodorus, otherwise called the *Adventures of Theagenes and Chariclea*, is a romance written in the decline of the Roman empire by an Asiatic Greek of that name, who boasted to be descended from the sun (Heliodorus is sun-given), and who afterwards became Christian bishop of Tricca in Thessaly. It is said (but the story is apocryphal) that a synod, thinking the danger of a love romance aggravated by this elevation to the mitre, required of the author that he should give up either his book or his bishopric; and that he chose to do the latter;—a story so good,

that it is a pity one must doubt it. The merits and defects of the work have been stated at length by Mr. Dunlop,* apparently with great judgment. They may be briefly summed up, as consisting,—the defects, in want of character and probability, sameness of vicissitude, and inartificiality of ordonnance; the merits, in an interesting and gradual development of the story, variety and vivacity of description, elegance of style, and one good character,—that of the heroine, who is indeed very charming, being "endued with great strength of mind, united to a delicacy of feeling, and an address which turns every situation to the best advantage." The work also abounds in curious local accounts of Egypt, and of the customs of the time, interesting to an antiquary.

The impression produced upon our own mind after reading the version before us, accorded with Mr. Dunlop's criticism, and was a feeling betwixt confusion and delight, as if we had been witnessing the adventures of a sort of Grecian Harlequin and Columbine, perpetually running in and out of the stage, accompanied by an old gentleman, and pursued by thieves and murderers. The incidents are most gratuitous, but often beautifully described, and so are the persons; and the work has been such a general favourite, that the subsequent Greek romancers copied it; the old French school of romance arose of it; it has been used by

* "History of Fiction." Second edition. Vol. i. p. 30.

Spenser, Tasso, and Guarini; imitated by Sydney in his Arcadia; painted from by Raphael; and succeeding romancers, with Sir Walter Scott for the climax, have adopted from it the striking and picturesque nature of their exordiums.

The following is one of the two subjects chosen by Raphael,—a description of a love at first sight, painted with equal force and delicacy. A sacrificial rite is being performed, at which the hero of the story first meets with the heroine:—

"This he said, and began to make the offering; while Theagenes took the torch from the hands of Chariclea. Sure, Knemon, that the soul is a divine thing, and allied to the superior nature, we know by its operations and functions. As soon as these two beheld each other, their souls, as if acquainted at first sight, pressed to meet their equals in worth and beauty. At first they remained amazed and without motion; at length, though slowly, Chariclea gave, and he received the torch; so fixing their eyes on one another, as if they had been calling to remembrance where they had met before, then they smiled, but so stealingly, as it could hardly be perceived, but a little in their eyes, and as ashamed, they hid away the motions of joy with blushes; and again, when affection (as I imagine) had engaged their hearts, they grew pale."—p. 109.

But what we chiefly wrote this article for, was to lay before the reader a most striking description of a witch raising the dead body of her son, to ask it unlawful questions. The heroine and her guardian, who are resting in a cave to which the hag has conducted them while benighted, become involuntary

witnesses of the scene, which is painted with a vigour worthy of Spenser or Julio Romano. The old wretch, bent on her unhallowed purposes, forcing the body to stand upright, and leaping about a pit and a fire with a naked sword in her hand and a bloody arm, presents a rare image of withered and feeble wickedness, made potent by will:—

"Chariclea sat down in another corner of the cell, the moon then rising and lightening all without. Calasiris fell into a fast sleep, being tired at once with age and the long journey. Chariclea, kept awake with care, became spectator of a most horrid scene, though usual among those people. For the woman supposing herself to be alone, and not likely to be interrupted, nor so much as to be seen by any person, fell to her work. In the first place she digged a pit in the earth, and then made a fire on each side thereof, placing the body of her son between the two plains; then taking a pitcher from off a three-legged stool that stood by, she poured honey into the pit, milk out of a second, and so out of a third, as if she had been doing sacrifice. Then taking a piece of dough, formed into the likeness of a man, crowned with laurel and bdellium, she cast it into the pit. After this, snatching a sword that lay in the field, *with more than Bacchanal fury* (addressing herself to the moon in many strange terms) she launched her arm, and with a branch of laurel bedewed with her blood, she besprinkled the fire: with many other prodigious ceremonies. *Then bowing herself to the body of her son, whispering in his ear*, she awakened him, and by the force of her charms, *made him to stand upright*. Chariclea, who had hitherto looked on with sufficient fear, was now astonished; wherefore she waked Calasiris to be likewise spectator of what was done. They stood unseen themselves, but plainly beheld, by the light of the moon and fire, where the

business was performed; and by reason of the little distance, heard the discourse, the beldam now bespeaking her son *in a louder voice.* The question which she asked him was, if her son, who was yet living, should return safe home? To this he answered nothing; only nodding his head, gave her doubtful conjectures of his success; and therewith fell flat upon his face. She turned the body with the face upwards, and again repeating her question, *but with much greater violence,* uttering many incantations; and *leaping up and down with the sword in her hand,* turning sometimes to the fire, and then to the pit, she once more awakened him, and setting him upright, urged him to answer her in plain words, and not in doubtful signs. In the mean time Chariclea desired Calasiris, that they might go nearer, and inquire of the old woman about Theagenes; but he refused, affirming that the spectacle was impious; that it was not decent for any person of priestly office to be present, much less delighted with such performances; that prayers and lawful sacrifices were their business; and not with impure rites and inquiries of death, as that Egyptian did, of which mischance had made us spectators. While he was thus speaking, the dead person made answer, with a *hollow and dreadful tone: At first I spared you, mother* (said he), and suffered your transgressing against human nature and the laws of destiny, and by charms and witchcraft disturbing those things which should rest inviolated: for even the dead retain a reverence towards their parents, as much as is possible for them; but since you exceed all bounds, being not content with the wicked action you began, nor satisfied with raising me up to give you signs, but also force *me, a dead body, to speak,* neglecting my sepulture, and keeping me from the mansion of departed souls: *hear those things which at first I was afraid to acquaint you withal.* Neither your son shall return alive, nor shall yourself escape that death by the sword, which is due to your crimes; but conclude that life in a short time, which you have spent in wicked practices: forasmuch as you have not

only done these things alone, but made other persons spectators of these dreadful mysteries that were so concealed in outward silence, acquainting them with the affairs and fortunes of the dead. One of them is a priest, which makes it more tolerable; who knows, by his wisdom, that such things are not to be divulged;—a person dear to the Gods, who shall with his arrival prevent the duel of his sons prepared for combat, and compose their difference. But that which is more grievous is, that a virgin has been spectator of all that has been done, and heard what was said: a virgin and lover, that has wandered through countries in search of her betrothed; with whom, after infinite labours and dangers, she shall arrive at the outmost part of the earth, and live in royal state. Having thus said, he again fell prostrate. The hag being sensible who were the spectators, *armed as she was with a sword, in a rage sought them amongst the dead bodies* where she thought they lay concealed, to kill them, as persons who had invaded her, and crossed the operation of her charms. While she was thus employed, she struck her groin upon the splinter of a spear that stuck in the ground, by which she died; immediately fulfilling the prophecy of her son."

This surely is a very striking fiction. We recommend the whole work to the lovers of old books; and must not forget to notice the pleasant surprise expressed by Warton at the supposed difference of fortune between its author who lost a bishopric by writing it, and Amyot, the Frenchman, who was rewarded with an abbey for translating it. Amyot himself afterwards became a bishop. We may add, as a pleasant coincidence, that it was one of Amyot's pupils and benefactors,—Henry the Second,—who gave a bishopric to the lively Italian novelist, Ban-

dello. Books were books in those days, not batches, by the baker's dozen, turned out every morning; and the gayest of writers were held in serious estimation accordingly.

VER-VERT;*

OR,

THE PARROT OF THE NUNS.

(FROM THE FRENCH OF GRESSET.)

"What words have passed thy lips?"

MILTON.

INTRODUCTION.

THIS story is the subject of one of the most agreeable poems in the French language, and has the additional piquancy of having been written by the author when he was a Jesuit. The delicate moral which is insinuated against the waste of time in nunneries, and the perversion of good and useful feeling into trifling channels, promised to have an effect (and most likely had) which startled some feeble minds. Our author did not remain a Jesuit long, but he was allowed to retire from his order without scandal. He was a man of so much integrity as well as wit, that his brethren regretted his

* Sometimes written *Vert-Vert* (Green-green).

loss, as much as the world was pleased with the acquisition.

After having undergone the admiration of the circles in Paris, Gresset married, and lived in retirement. He died in 1777, beloved by everybody but the critics. Critics were not the good-natured people in those times which they have lately become; and they worried him as a matter of course, because he was original. He was intimate with Jean Jacques Rousseau. The self-tormenting and somewhat affected philosopher came to see him in his retreat; and being interrogated respecting his misfortunes, said to him, "You have made a parrot speak; but you will find it a harder task with a bear."

Gresset wrote other poems and a comedy, which are admired; but the Parrot is the feather in his cap. It was an addition to the stock of originality, and has greater right perhaps than the *Lutrin* to challenge a comparison with the *Rape of the Lock.* This is spoken with deference to better French scholars; but there is at least more of Pope's delicacy and invention in the *Ver-Vert* than in the *Lutrin;* and it does not depend so much as the latter upon a mimicry of the classics. It is less made up of what preceded it.

I am afraid this is but a bad preface to a prose translation. I would willingly have done it in verse, but other things demanded my time; and after wistfully looking at a page or two with which I in-

dulged myself, I renounced the temptation. Readers not bitten with the love of verse, will hardly conceive how much philosophy was requisite to do this: but they may guess, if they have a turn for good eating, and give up dining with an epicure.

I must mention, that a subject of this nature is of necessity more piquant in a Catholic country than a Protestant. But the loss of poor Ver-Vert's purity of speech comes home to all Christendom; and it is hard if the tender imaginations of the fair sex do not sympathize everywhere both with parrot and with nuns. When the poem appeared in France, it touched the fibres of the whole polite world, male and female. A minister of state made the author a present of a coffee-service in porcelain, on which was painted, in the most delicate colours, the whole history of the "immortal bird." If I had the leisure and the means of Mr. Rogers, nothing should hinder me from trying to out-do (in one respect) the delicacy of his publications, in versifying a subject so worthy of vellum and morocco. The paper should be as soft as the novices' lips, the register as rose-coloured; every canto should have vignettes from the hand of Stothard; and the binding should be green and gold, the colours of the hero.

Alas! and must all this end in a prose abstract, and an anti-climax! Weep all ye little Loves and Graces, ye

"Veneres Cupidinesque!
Et quantum est hominum venustiorum."

But first enable us, for our good-will, to relate the story, albeit we cannot do it justice.*

* There are two English poetical versions of the *Ver-Vert*; one by Dr. Geddes, which I have never seen; the other, by John Gilbert Cooper, author of the *Song to Winifreda*. The latter is written on the false principle of naturalizing French versification; and it is not immodest in a prose translator to say that it failed altogether. The following is a sample of the commencement:—

"At Nevers, but few years ago,
Among the Nuns o' the *Visitation*,
There dwelt a Parrot, though a beau,
For sense of wondrous *reputation*;
Whose virtues and genteel address,
Whose figure and whose noble soul,
Would have secured him from distress,
Could wit and beauty fate control.
Ver-Vert (for so the nuns agreed
To call this noble *personage*)
The hopes of an illustrious breed,
To India owed his *parentage*."

CHAPTER I.

Character and manners of Ver-Vert.—His popularity in the Convent, and the life he led with the Nuns.—Toilets and looking-glasses not unknown among those ladies.—Four canary birds and two cats die of rage and jealousy.

At Nevers, in the Convent of the Visitation, lived, not long ago, a famous parrot. His talents and good temper, nay, the virtues he possessed, besides his more earthly graces, would have rendered his whole life as happy as a portion of it, if happiness had been made for hearts like his.

Ver-Vert (for such was his name) was brought early from his native country; and while yet in his tender years, and ignorant of everything, was shut up in this convent for his good. He was a handsome creature, brilliant, spruce, and full of spirits, with all the candour and amiableness natural to his time of life; innocent withal as could be: in short, a bird worthy of such a blessed cage. His very prattle showed him born for a convent.

When we say that nuns undertake to look after a thing, we say all. No need to enter into the delicacy of their attentions. Nobody could rival the affection which was borne our hero by every mother in the convent, except the confessor; and even with respect to him, a sincere MS. has left it on record, that in more than one heart the bird had the advan-

tage of the holy Father. He partook, at any rate, of all the pretty sops and syrups with which the dear Father in God (thanks to the kindness of the sweet nuns) consoled his reverend stomach. Nuns have leisure: they have also loving hearts. Ver-Vert was a legitimate object of attachment, and he became the soul of the place. All the house loved him, except a few old nuns whom time and the toothache rendered jealous surveyors of the young ones. Not having arrived at years of discretion, too much judgment was not expected of him. He said and did what he pleased, and everything was found charming. He lightened the labours of the good sisters by his engaging ways,—pulling their veils, and pecking their stomachers. No party could be pleasant if he was not there to shine and to sidle about; to flutter and to whistle, and play the nightingale. Sport he did, that is certain; and yet he had all the modesty, all the prudent daring and submission in the midst of his pretensions, which became a novice, even in sporting. Twenty tongues were incessantly asking him questions, and he answered with propriety to every one. It was thus, of old, that Cæsar dictated to four persons at once in four different styles.

Our favourite had the whole range of the house. He preferred dining in the refectory, where he ate as he pleased. In the intervals of the table, being of an indefatigable stomach, he amused his palate with pocket-loads of sweetmeats which the nuns

always carried about for him. Delicate attentions, ingenious and preventing cares, were born, they say, among the nuns of the Visitation. The happy Ver-Vert had reason to think so. He had a better place of it than a parrot at court. He lay, lapped up, as it were, in the very glove of contentment.

At bed-time he repaired to whatever cell he chose; and happy, too happy was the blessed sister, whose retreat at the return of nightfall it pleased him to honour with his presence. He seldom lodged with the old ones. The novices, with their simple beds, were more to his taste; which, you must observe, had always a peculiar turn for propriety. Ver-Vert used to take his station on the agnus-box,* and remain there till the star of Venus rose in the morning. He had then the pleasure of witnessing the toilet of the fresh little nun; for between ourselves (and I say it in a whisper) nuns have toilets. I have read somewhere, that they even like good ones. Plain veils require to be put on properly, as well as lace and diamonds. Furthermore, they have their fashions and modes. There is an art, a gusto in these things, inseparable from their natures. Sackcloth itself may sit well. Huckaback may have an air. The swarm of the little loves who meddle in all directions, and who know how to whisk through the grates of convents, take a pleasure in giving a profane turn to a bandeau,—a piquancy to a nun's tucker. In short, before one goes to the parlour, it

* A box containing a religious figure of a Lamb.

is as well to give a glance or two at the looking-glass. But let that rest. I say all in confidence: so now to return to our hero.

In this blissful state of indolence Ver-Vert passed his time without a care,—without a moment of *ennui*,—lord, undisputed, of all hearts. For him sister Agatha forgot her sparrows: for him, or because of him, four canary birds died out of rage and spite;—for him, a couple of tom-cats, once in favour, took to their cushions, and never afterwards held up their heads.

Who could have foreboded, in the course of a life so charming, that the morals of our hero were taken care of, only to be ruined! that a day should arise, a day full of guilt and astonishment, when Ver-Vert, the idol of so many hearts, should be nothing but an object of pity and horror!

Let us husband our tears as long as possible, for come they must:—sad fruit of the over-tender care of our dear little sisters!

CHAPTER II.

Further details respecting the piety and accomplishments of our hero.—Sister Melanie in the habit of exhibiting them.—A visit from him is requested by the Nuns of the Visitation at Nantes, —Consternation in the Convent.—The visit conceded.—Agonies at his departure.

You may guess, that, in a school like this, a bird of our hero's parts of speech could want nothing to complete his education. Like a nun, he never ceased talking, except at meals; but at the same time, he always spoke like a book. His style was pickled and preserved in the very sauce and sugar of good behaviour. He was none of your flashy parrots, puffed up with airs of fashion and learned only in vanities. Ver-Vert was a devout fowl; a beautiful soul, led by the hand of innocence. He had no notion of evil; never uttered an improper word; but then to be even with those who knew how to talk, he was deep in canticles, *Oremuses*, and mystical colloquies. His *Pax vobiscum* was edifying. His *Hail, sister!* was not to be lightly thought of. He knew even a "Meditation" or so, and some of the delicatest touches out of "Marie Alacoque."* Doubtless he had every help to edification. There were many learned sisters in the convent who knew

* A famous devotee.

by heart all the Christmas carols, ancient and modern. Formed under their auspices, our parrot soon equalled his instructors. He acquired even their very tone, giving it all the pious lengthiness, the holy sighs, and languishing cadences, of the singing of the dear sisters, groaning little doves.

The renown of merit like this was not to be confined to a cloister. In all Nevers, from morning till night, nothing was talked of but the darling scenes exhibited by the parrot of the blessed nuns. People came as far as from Moulins to see him. Ver-Vert never budged out of the parlour. Sister Melanie, in her best stomacher, held him, and made the spectators remark his tints, his beauties, his infantine sweetness. The bird sat at the receipt of victory. And yet even these attractions were forgotten when he spoke. Polished, rounded, brimful of the pious gentilities which the younger aspirants had taught him, our illustrious parrot commenced his recitation. Every instant a new charm developed itself; and what was remarkable, nobody fell asleep. His hearers listened; they hummed, they applauded. He, nevertheless, trained to perfection, and convinced of the nothingness of glory, always withdrew into the recesses of his heart, and triumphed with modesty. Closing his beak, and dropping into a low tone of voice, he bowed himself with sanctity, and so left his world edified. He uttered nothing under a gentility or a dulcitude; that is to say, with the exception of a few words of

scandal or so, which crept from the convent-grate into the parlour.

Thus lived, in this delectable nest, like a master, a saint, and a true sage as he was, Father Ver-Vert, dear to more than one Hebe; fat as a monk, and not less reverend; handsome as a sweetheart; knowing as an abbé; always loved, and always worthy to be loved; polished, perfumed, cockered up, the very pink of perfection: happy, in short, if he had never travelled.

But now comes the time of miserable memory, the critical minute in which his glory is to be eclipsed. O guilt! O shame! O cruel recollection! Fatal journey, why must we see thy calamities beforehand? Alas! a great name is a perilous thing. Your retired lot is by much the safest. Let this example, my friends, show you, that too many talents, and too flattering a success, often bring in their train the ruin of one's virtue.

The renown of thy brilliant achievements, Ver-Vert, spread itself abroad on every side, even as far as Nantes. There, as everybody knows, is another meek fold of the reverend Mothers of the Visitation,—ladies, who, as elsewhere in this country of ours, are by no means the last to know everything. To hear of our parrot was to desire to see him; and desire, at all times and in everybody, is a devouring flame. Judge what it must be in a nun.

Behold, then, at one blow, twenty heads turned for a parrot. The ladies of Nantes wrote to Nevers,

to beg that this bewitching bird might be allowed to come down to the Loire, and pay them a visit. The latter is sent off; but when, ah, when will come the answer? In something less than a fortnight. What an age! Letter upon letter is despatched, entreaty on entreaty. There is no more sleep in the house. Sister Cecilie will die of it.

At length the epistle arrives at Nevers. Tremendous event! A chapter is held upon it. Dismay follows the consultation. "What! lose Ver-Vert! O heavens! What are we to do in these desolate holes and corners without the darling bird! Better to die at once!" Thus spoke one of the younger sisters, whose heart, tired of having nothing to do, still lay open to a little innocent pleasure. To say the truth, it was no great matter to wish to keep a parrot, in a place where no other bird was to be had. Nevertheless, the older nuns determined upon letting the charmer go;—for a fortnight. Their prudent heads didn't choose to embroil themselves with their sisters of Nantes.

This bill, on the part of their ladyships, produced great disorder in the commons. What a sacrifice! Is it in human nature to consent to it? "Is it true?" quoth sister Seraphine:—"What! live, and Ver-Vert away!" In another quarter of the room, thrice did the vestry-nun turn pale; four times did she sigh; she wept, she groaned, she fainted, she lost her voice. The whole place is in mourning. I know not what prophetic finger traced the journey

in black colours; but the dreams of the night redoubled the horrors of the day. In vain. The fatal moment arrives; everything is ready; courage must be summoned to bid adieu. Not a sister but groaned like a turtle; so long was the widowhood she anticipated. How many kisses did not Ver-Vert receive on going out! They retain him: they bathe him with tears: his attractions redouble at every step. Nevertheless, he is at length outside the walls; he is gone; and out of the monastery, with him, flies love!

CHAPTER III.

Lamentable state of manners in the boat which carries our hero down the Loire.—He becomes corrupted.—His biting the nun that came to meet him—Ecstacy of the other nuns on hearing of his arrival.

THE same vagabond of a boat which contained the sacred bird, contained also a couple of giggling damsels, three dragoons, a wet nurse, a monk, and two garçons; pretty society for a young thing just out of a monastery!

Ver-Vert thought himself in another world. It was no longer texts and orisons with which he was treated, but words which he never heard before, and those words none of the most Christian. The dragoons, a race not eminent for devotion, spoke no

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language but that of the ale-house. All their hymns to beguile the road were in honour of Bacchus; all their moveable feasts consisted only in those of the ordinary. The garçons and the three new graces kept up a concert in the taste of the allies. The boatmen cursed and swore, and made horrible rhymes; taking care, by a masculine articulation, that not a syllable should lose its vigour. Ver-Vert, melancholy and frightened, sat dumb in a corner. He knew not what to say or think.

In the course of the voyage, the company resolved to "fetch out" our hero. The task fell on Brother Lubin the monk, who in a tone very unlike his profession, put some questions to the handsome forlorn. The benign bird answered in his best manner. He sighed with a formality the most finished, and said in a pedantic tone, "Hail, Sister!"—At this "Hail," you may judge whether the hearers shouted with laughter. Every tongue fell on poor Father Parrot.

Our novice bethought within him, that he must have spoken amiss. He began to consider, that if he would be well with the fair portion of the company, he must adopt the style of their friends. Being naturally of a daring soul, and having been hitherto well fumed with incense, his modesty was not proof against so much contempt. Ver-Vert lost his patience; and in losing his patience, alas! poor fellow, he lost his innocence. He even began, inwardly, to mutter ungracious curses against the

good sisters, his instructors, for not having taught him the true refinements of the French language, its nerve and its delicacy. He accordingly set himself to learn them with all his might; not speaking much, it is true, but not the less inwardly studying for all that. In two days (such is the progress of evil in young minds) he forgot all that had been taught him, and in less than three was as offhand a swearer as any in the boat. He swore worse than an old devil at the bottom of a holy-water box. It has been said, that nobody becomes abandoned at once. Ver-Vert scorned the saying. He had a contempt for any more novitiates. He became a blackguard in the twinkling of an eye. In short, on one of the boatmen exclaiming, "Go to the devil," Ver-Vert echoed the wretch! The company applauded, and he swore again. Nay, he swore other oaths. A new vanity seized him; and degrading his generous organ, he now felt no other ambition but that of pleasing the wicked.

During these melancholy scenes, what were you about, chaste nuns of the convent of Nevers? Doubtless you were putting up vows for the safe return of the vilest of ingrates, a vagabond unworthy of your anxiety, who holds his former loves in contempt. Anxious affection is in your hearts, melancholy in your dwelling. Cease your prayers, dear deluded ones; dry up your tears. Ver-Vert is no longer worthy of you; he is a *raf*, an apostate, a common swearer. The winds and the water-nymphs

have spoilt the fruit of your labours. Genius he may be still; but what is genius without virtue?

Meanwhile, the boat was approaching the town of Nantes, where the new sisters of the Visitation expected it with impatience. The days and nights had never been so long. During all their torments, however, they had the image of the coming angel before them,—the polished soul, the bird of noble breeding, the tender, sincere, and edifying voice—behaviour, sentiments,—distinguished merit—oh grief! what is it all to come to?

The boat arrives; the passengers disembark. A lay-sister of the turning-box* was waiting in the dock, where she had been over and over again at stated times, ever since the letters were despatched. Her looks, darting over the water, seemed to hasten the vessel that conveyed our hero. The rascal guessed her business at first sight. Her prudish eyes, letting a look out at the corner, her great coif, white gloves, dying voice, and little pendant cross, were not to be mistaken. Ver-Vert ruffled his feathers with disgust. There is reason to believe that he gave her internally to the devil. He was now all for the army, and could not bear the thought of new ceremonies and litanies. However, my gentleman was obliged to submit. The lay-sister carried him off in spite of his vociferations. They say, he bit her in going; some say in the neck, others on the arm. I believe it is not well known where he

* A box at the convent-gate, by which things are received.

bit her; but the circumstance is of no consequence. Off he went. The devotee was soon within the convent, and the visitor's arrival was announced.

Here 's a noise! At the first sound of the news, the bell was set ringing. The nuns were at prayers, but up they all jump. They shriek, they clap their hands, they fly. "'T is he, sister! 'T is he! He is in the great parlour!" The great parlour is filled in a twinkling. Even the old nuns, marching in order, forget the weight of their years. The whole house was grown young again. It is said to have been on this occasion, that Mother Angelica ran for the first time.

CHAPTER THE LAST.

Admiration of the parrot's new friend converted into astonishment and horror.—Ver-Vert keeps no measures with his shocking acquirements.—The nuns fly from him in terror, and determine upon instantly sending him back, not, however, without pity.—His return, and astonishment of his old friends.—He is sentenced to solitary confinement, which restores his virtue.—Transport of the nuns, who kill him with kindness.

At length the blessed spectacle bursts upon the good sisters. They cannot satiate their eyes with admiring: and in truth, the rascal was not the less handsome for being less virtuous. His military look and *petit maître* airs gave him even a new charm. All mouths burst out in his praise; all at once. He

however, does not deign to utter one pious word, but stands rolling his eyes like a young Carmelite. Grief the first. There was a scandal in this air of effrontery. In the second place, when the Prioress, with an august air, and like an inward-hearted creature as she was, wished to interchange a few sentiments with the bird, the first words my gentleman uttered,—the only answer he condescended to give, and that too with an air of nonchalance, or rather contempt, and like an unfeeling villain, was,—"What a pack of fools these nuns are!"

History says he learned these words on the road.

At this *debût*, Sister Augustin, with an air of the greatest sweetness, hoping to make their visitor cautious, said to him, "For shame, my dear brother." The dear brother, not to be corrected, rhymed her a word or two, too audacious to be repeated.

"Holy Jesus!" exclaimed the sister; "he is a sorcerer, my dear mother!—Just Heaven! what a wretch! Is this the divine parrot!"

Ver-Vert, like a reprobate at the gallows, made no other answer than by setting up a dance, and singing, "Here we go up, up, up;" which, to improve, he commenced with an "Oh d—mme."

The nuns would have stopped his mouth; but he was not to be hindered. He gave a buffoon imitation of the prattle of the young sisters; and then shutting his beak, and dropping into a palsied imbecility, mimicked the nasal drawl of his old enemies, the antiques!

But it was still worse, when, tired and worn out with the stale sentences of his reprovers, Ver-Vert foamed and raged like a corsair, thundering out all the terrible words he had learned aboard the vessel. Heavens! how he swore, and what things he said! His dissolute voice knew no bounds. The lower regions themselves appeared to open before them. Words not to be thought of danced upon his beak. The young sisters thought he was talking Hebrew.

"Oh!—blood and 'ouns! Whew! D—m—n! Here 's a h—ll of a storm!"

At these tremendous utterances, all the place trembled with horror. The nuns, without more ado, fled a thousand ways, making as many signs of the cross. They thought it was the end of the world. Poor Mother Cicely, falling on her nose, was the ruin of her last tooth. "Eternal Father!" exclaimed Sister Vivian, opening with difficulty a sepulchral voice; "Lord have mercy on us! who has sent us this antichrist? Sweet Saviour! What a conscience can it be, which swears in this manner, like one of the damned? Is this the famous wit, the sage Ver-Vert, who is so beloved and extolled? For Heaven's sake, let him depart from among us without more ado."—"O God of love!" cried sister Ursula, taking up the lamentation; "What horrors! Is this the way they talk among our sisters at Nevers? This their perverse language! This the manner in which they form

youth! What a heretic! O divine wisdom, let us get rid of him, or we shall all go to the wicked place together!"

In short, Ver-Vert is fairly put in his cage, and sent on his travels back again. They pronounce him detestable, abominable, a condemned criminal, convicted of having endeavoured to pollute the virtue of the holy sisters. All the convent sign his decree of banishment, but they shed tears in doing it. It was impossible not to pity a reprobate in the flower of his age, who was unfortunate enough to hide such a depraved heart under an exterior so beautiful. For his part, Ver-Vert desired nothing better than to be off. He was carried back to the river side in a box, and did not bite the lay-sister again.

But what was the despair, when he returned home, and would fain have given his old instructors a like serenade! Nine venerable sisters, their eyes in tears, their senses confused with horror, their veils two deep, condemned him in full conclave. The younger ones, who might have spoken for him, were not allowed to be present. One or two were for sending him back to the vessel; but the majority resolved upon keeping and chastising him. He was sentenced to two months' abstinence, three of imprisonment, and four of silence. No garden, no toilet, no bed-room, no little cakes. Nor was this all. The sisters chose for his jailer the very Alecto of the convent, a hideous old fury, a veiled

ape, an octogenary skeleton, a spectacle made on purpose for the eye of a penitent.

In spite of the cares of this inflexible Argus, some amiable nuns would often come with their sympathy to relieve the horrors of the bird's imprisonment. Sister Rosalie, more than once, brought him almonds before breakfast. But what are almonds in a room cut off from the rest of the world! What are sweetmeats in captivity but bitter herbs?

Covered with shame and instructed by misfortune, or weary of the eternal old hag his companion, our hero at last found himself contrite. He forgot the dragoons and the monk, and once more in unison with the holy sisters both in matter and manner, became more devout than a canon. When they were sure of his conversion, the divan re-assembled, and agreed to shorten the term of his penitence. Judge if the day of his deliverance was a day of joy! All his future moments, consecrated to gratitude, were to be spun by the hands of love and security. O faithless pleasure! O vain expectation of mortal delight! All the dormitories were dressed with flowers. Exquisite coffee, songs, lively exercise, an amiable tumult of pleasure, a plenary indulgence of liberty, all breathed of love and delight; nothing announced the coming adversity. But, O indiscreet liberality! O fatal overflowingness of the hearts of nuns! Passing too quickly from abstinence to abundance, from the hard bosom of misfortune to whole seas of sweetness, saturated with sugar and

set on fire with liqueurs, Ver-Vert fell one day on a box of sweetmeats, and lay on his deathbed. His roses were all changed to cypress. In vain the sisters endeavoured to recall his fleeting spirit. The sweet excess had hastened his destiny, and the fortunate victim of love expired in the bosom of pleasure. His last words were much admired, but history has not recorded them. Venus herself, closing his eyelids, took him with her into the little Elysium described by the lover of Corinna, where Ver-Vert assumed his station among the heroes of the parrot race, close to the one that was the subject of the poet's elegy.*

To describe how his death was lamented, is impossible. The present history was taken from one of the circulars composed by the nuns on the occasion. His portrait was painted after nature. More than one hand gave him a new life in colours and embroidery; and Grief, taking up the stitches in her turn, drew his effigies in the midst of a border of tears of white silk. All the funeral honours were paid him, which Helicon is accustomed to pay to illustrious birds. His mausoleum was built at the foot of a myrtle; and on a piece of porphyry environed with flowers, the tender Artemisias placed the following epitaph, inscribed in letters of gold:—

O, ye who come to tattle in this wood,
Unknown to us, the graver sisterhood,

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* See Ovid, Liber Amorum. Book II. Elegy 6.

Hold for one moment (if ye can) your tongues,
Ye novices, and hear how fortune wrongs.
Hush: or, if hushing be too hard a task,
Hear but one little speech; 't is all we ask—
One word will pierce ye with a thousand darts:—
Here lies Ver-Vert, and with him lie all hearts.

They say, nevertheless, that the shade of the bird is not in the tomb. The immortal parrot, according to good authority, survives in the nuns themselves; and is destined, through all ages, to transfer, from sister to sister, his soul and his tattle.

SPECIMENS OF BRITISH POETESSES.

No. I.

Paucity of collections of our female poetry.—Specimens of Anne Bullen, Queen Elizabeth, Lady Elizabeth Carew, Lady Mary Wroth, Katharine Philips, the Duchess of Newcastle, Anne Killigrew, the Marchioness of Wharton, Mrs. Taylor, Aphra Behn, and the Countess of Winchelsea.

About a hundred years ago, a collection of the poetry of our fair countrywomen was made under the title of "Poems by Eminent Ladies;" and twenty years ago, a second appeared, under the title at the head of this paper. These, we believe, are the only two publications of the kind ever known in England; a circumstance hardly to the credit of the public, when it is considered what stuff it has put up with in collections of "British Poets," and how far superior such verse-writers as Lady Winchelsea, Mrs. Barbauld, and Charlotte Smith were to the Sprats, and Halifaxes, and Stepneys, and Wattses that were re-edited by Chalmers, Anderson, and Dr. Johnson; to say nothing of the women of genius that

have since appeared. The French and Italians have behaved with more respect to their Deshoulieres and Colonnas. It is not pretended (with the exception of what is reported of Corinna, and what really appears to have been the case with Sappho), that women have ever written poetry equal to that of men, any more than they have been their equals in painting and music. Content with conquering them in other respects, with furnishing them the most charming of their inspirations, and dividing with them the sweet praise of *singing*, they have left to the more practical sex the glories of pen and pencil. They have been the muses who set the poets writing; the goddesses to whom their altars flamed. When they did write, they condescended, in return, to put on the earthly feminine likeness of some favourite of the other sex. Lady Winchelsea formed herself on Cowley and Dryden; Vittoria Colonna, on Petrarch and Michael Angelo. Sappho is the exception that proves the rule (if she was an exception). Even Miss Barrett, whom we take to be the most imaginative poetess that has appeared in England, perhaps in Europe, and who will attain to great eminence if the fineness of her vein can but outgrow a certain morbidity, reminds her readers of the peculiarities of contemporary genius. She is like an ultra-sensitive sister of Alfred Tennyson. We are the more desirous to mention the name of this lady, as the following remarks on the poetesses were made before she was known. Its omission,

together with that of the names of Mrs. Howitt, Mrs. Norton, Lady Dufferin, and other charming people, of whom we then knew as little, might otherwise have been thought unjust by the reader, however unimportant to themselves.

Mr. Dyce's collection is the one from which our extracts are chiefly made. The other commences no earlier than the time of Pope and Swift. Mr. Dyce begins, as he ought to do, with the ancientest poetical lady he can find, which is the famous Abbess, Juliana Berners, who leads the fair train in a manner singularly masculine and discordant, blowing a horn, instead of playing on a lute; for the reverend dame was a hunting parson in petticoats. She is the author of three tracts, well known to antiquaries, on Hawking, Hunting, and Armory (heraldry); and her verses, as might be expected, are more curious than bewitching. Next to her comes poor Anne Bullen, some verses attributed to whom are very touching, especially the second and last stanzas, and the burden:—

O death! rocke me on slepe,
Bring me on quiet reste;
Let passe my verye guiltless goste
Out of my careful breast.
Toll on the passing-bell,
Ring out the doleful knell,
Let the sound my deth tell,
For I must dye;
There is no remedy;
For now I dye.

Farewell, my pleasures past,
Wellcum, my present payne;
feel my torments so increse
That lyfe cannot remayne.
Cease now the passing-bell,
Rong is my doleful knell,
For the sound my dethe doth tell,
Deth doth draw nye;
Sound my end dolefully,
For now I dye.

But our attention is drawn off by the stately bluntness of QUEEN ELIZABETH, who writes in the same high style that she acted, and seems ready to knock us on the head if we do not admire;—which, luckily, we do. The conclusion of her verses on Mary Queen of Scots (whom Mr. Dyce has well designated as "that lovely, unfortunate, but surely not guiltless woman") are very characteristic:—

"No foreign banish'd wight
Shall anchor in this port;
Our realm it brooks no stranger's force;
Let them elsewhere resort.
Our rusty sword with rest
Shall first his edge employ,
And poll their tops that seek
Such change, and gape for joy."

A politician thoughtlessly gaping for joy, and having his head shaved off like a turnip by the sword of the Maiden Queen, presents an example considerably to

be eschewed. Hear, however, the same woman in love;—

"I grieve, and dare not show my discontent;
I love, and yet am forc'd to seem to hate;
I do, yet dare not say, I ever meant;
I seem stark mute, yet inwardly do prate:
I am, and not; I freeze, and yet am burn'd,
Since from myself my other self I turn'd.

"My care is like my shadow in the sun,
Follows me flying, flies when I pursue it;
Stands and lies by me; does what I have done;
This too familiar care does make me rue it;
No means I find to rid him from my breast,
Till by the end of things it be suppress.

"Some gentler passions slide into my mind,
For I am soft and made of melting snow;
Or be more cruel, Love, and so be kind;
Let me or float or sink, be high or low:
Or let me live with some more sweet content,
Or die, and so forget what love e'er meant."

Signed "*Finis, Eliza. Regina*, upon Moun....'s departure," Ashmol. Mus. MSS. 6969. (781) p. 142.

Moun....is probably Blount, Lord "Mountjoy," of whose family was the late Earl of Blessington. Elizabeth pinched his cheek when he first knelt to her at court, and made him blush.

Lady Elizabeth Carew, "who is understood to be the authoress of *The Tragedy of Mariam, the fair Queen of Jewry, written by that learned, virtuous, and truly noble lady, E. C.* 1613," was truly noble indeed,

if she wrote the following stanzas in one of the choruses of that work:—

"We say our hearts are great, and cannot yield;
Because they cannot yield, *it proves them poor;*
Great hearts are task'd beyond their pow'r but seld;
The weakest lion will the loudest roar.
Truth's school for certain doth this same allow,—
High-heartedness doth sometimes teach to bow.

"A noble heart doth teach a virtuous scorn;
To *scorn* to owe a duty over long;
To *scorn* to be for benefits forborne;
To *scorn* to lie; to *scorn* to do a wrong;
To *scorn* to bear an injury in mind;
To *scorn* a free-born heart slave-like to bind."

Lady Mary Wroth, a Sidney, niece of Sir Philip, has the following beautiful passages in a song with a pretty burden to it:—

"Love in chaos did appear;
When nothing was, yet he seem'd clear;
Nor when light could be descried,
To his crown a light was tied.
Who can blame me?

"Could I my past time begin
I would not commit such sin
To live an hour and not to love,
Since Love makes us perfect prove.
Who can blame me?"

If the reader wishes to know what sort of a thing the shadow of an angel is, he cannot learn it better than from the verses of an anonymous Authoress to

her Husband, published in the year 1652. She bids him not to wear mourning for her, not even a black ring :—

"But this bright diamond, let it be
Worn in rememberance of me,
And when it sparkles in your eye,
Think 't is my shadow passeth by:
For why? More bright you shall me see,
Than that, or any gem can be."

Some of the verses of KATHERINE PHILIPS, who was praised by the poets of her time under the title of "the matchless Orinda," and who called her husband, a plain country gentleman, "Antenor," have an easy though antithetical style, like the lighter ones of Cowley, or the verses of Sheffield and his French contemporaries. One might suppose the following to have been written in order to assist the addresses of some young courtier :—

TO LADY ELIZABETH BOYLE, SINGING A SONG OF WHICH ORINDA WAS THE AUTHOR.

"Subduing fair! what will you win,
To use a needless dart?
Why then so many to take in
One undefended heart?

"I came exposed to all your charms,
'Gainst which, *the first half hour,*
I had no will to take up arms,
And in the next, no power.

"How can you choose but win the day?
Who can resist the siege?
Who in one action know the way
To vanquish and oblige?"

And so on, for four more stanzas. "To vanquish and *obleege*" has a very dandy tone.*

The following are in the same epigrammatical taste, and very pleasing. They are part of a poem "On a Country Life:"—

"Then welcome, dearest solitude,
My great felicity;
Though some are pleased to call thee rude,
Thou art not so, but we.

"Opinion is the rate of things;
From hence our peace doth flow;
I have a better fate than kings,
Because I think it so.

"*Silence and innocence are safe:*—
A heart that's nobly true
At all these little arts can laugh,
That do the world subdue."

* Chesterfield, in this word, is for using the English pronunciation of the letter *i*; which we believe is now the general custom. The late Mr. Kemble, in the course of an affable conversation with which George IV. indulged him, when Prince of Wales, is said to have begged as a favour that his illustrious interlocutor "would be pleased to extend his royal jaws, and say *oblige*, instead of *obleege*." Nevertheless all authority is in favour of the latter pronunciation—French, Italian, and Latin. But it is a pity to lose the noble sound of our *i*, one of the finest in the language.

MARGARET, DUCHESS of NEWCASTLE, with all the fantastic state she took upon her, and other absurdities arising from her want of judgment, was a woman of genius, and could shew a great deal of good sense, where other people were concerned. The following apostrophe on "the Theme of Love" has something in it extremely agreeable, between gaiety and gravity.

> "O Love, how thou art tired out with rhyme!
> Thou art a tree whereon all poets climb;
> And from thy branches every one takes some
> Of thy sweet fruit, which Fancy feeds upon."

Her grace wrote an Allegro and Penseroso, as well as Milton; and very good lines they contain. Her Euphrosyne does not mince the matter. She talks like a Nell Gwynne, and looks like her too, though all within bounds.

> "Mirth laughing came; and, running to me, flung
> *Her fat white arms* about my neck: there hung,
> Embrac'd and kiss'd me oft, and stroked my cheek,
> Saying, she would no other lover seek.
> I'll sing you songs, and please you ev'ry day,
> Invent new sports to pass the time away:
> I'll keep your heart, and guard it from *that thief*
> Dull Melancholy, Care, or sadder Grief,
> And make your eyes with Mirth to overflow:—
> With springing blood your cheeks soon fat shall grow;
> Your legs shall nimble be, your body light,
> *And all your spirits like to birds in flight.*
> Mirth shall digest your meat, and make you strong, &c.

But Melancholy! *She* will make you lean;
Your cheeks shall hollow grow, your jaws be seen.—
She 'll make you start at every voice you hear,
And visions strange shall to your eyes appear.—
Her voice is low, and gives a hollow sound;
She hates the light, and is in darkness found;
Or sits with blinking lamps, or tapers small,
Which various shadows make against the wall."

On the other hand, Melancholy says of Mirth, that she is only happy "just at her birth;" and that she—

"Like weeds doth grow,
Or such plants as cause madness, reason's foe.
Her face with laughter *crumples on a heap,*
Which makes great wrinkles, and ploughs furrows deep:
Her eyes do water, and her chin turns red,
Her mouth doth gape, teeth-bare, like one that 's dead:
She fulsome is, and gluts the senses all,
Offers herself, and comes before a call:"

And then, in a finer strain—

"Her house is built upon the golden sands,
Yet no foundation has, whereon it stands;
A palace 't is, and of a great resort,
It makes a noise, and gives a loud report,
Yet underneath the roof disasters lie,
Beat down the house, and many kill'd thereby:
I dwell in groves that gilt are with the sun,
Sit on the banks by which clear waters run;
In summers hot, down in a shade I lie;
My music is the buzzing of a fly;
I walk in meadows, where grows fresh green grass,
In fields, where corn is high, I often pass;

Walk up the hills, where round I prospects see,
Some brushy woods, and some all champaigns be;
Returning back, I in fresh pastures go,
To hear how sheep do bleat, and cows do low;
In winter cold, when nipping frosts come on,
Then I do live in a small house alone;
Altho' 't is plain, yet cleanly 't is within,
Like to a soul that's pure and clean from sin;
And there I dwell in quiet and still peace,
Not filled with cares how riches to increase;
I wish nor seek for vain and fruitless pleasures:
No riches are, but what the mind intreasures."

Dryden's young favourite, ANNE KILLEGREW, who comes next in the list (she was a niece of the famous wit) has no verses so unequal as these, and perhaps none so strong as some of them; but she is very clever, and promised to do honour to her master. She was accused of being helped by him in her writing, and repels the charge with spirit and sweetness. The lines "Advanc'd her height," and "Every laurel to her laurel bow'd," will remind the reader of her great friend. The concluding couplet is excellent.

"My laurels thus another's brow adorn'd,
My numbers they admir'd, but me they scorn'd:
Another's brow;—that had so rich a store
Of sacred wreaths that circled it before;
While mine, quite lost (like a small stream that ran
Into a vast and boundless ocean)
Was swallow'd up with what it join'd, and drown'd,
And that abyss yet no accession found.

"*Orinda* (*Albion's* and her sex's grace)
Owed not her glory to a beauteous face,
It was her radiant soul that shone within,
Which struck a lustre through her outward skin;
That did her lips and cheeks with roses dye,
Advanc'd her height, and sparkled in her eye.
Nor did her sex at all obstruct her fame,
But higher 'mong the stars it fix'd her name;
What she did write, not only all allow'd,
But ev'ry laurel to her laurel bow'd.

"The envious age, only to me alone,
Will not allow what I do write my own;
But let them rage, and 'gainst a maid conspire,
So deathless numbers from my tuneful lyre
Do ever flow; so *Phœbus*, I by thee
Divinely inspired, and possessed may be.
I willingly accept *Cassandra's* fate,
To speak the truth although believ'd too late."

ANNE, MARCHIONESS of WHARTON, who follows, has an agreeable song, worthy of repetition:—

"How hardly I conceal'd my tears,
How oft did I complain,
When many tedious days, my fears
Told me I lov'd in vain!

"But now my joys as wild are grown,
And hard to be conceal'd;
Sorrow may make a silent moan,
But joy will be reveal'd.

"I tell it to the bleating flocks,
To every stream and tree,
And bless the hollow murmuring rocks
For echoing back to me.

"Then you may see with how much joy
We want, we wish, believe:
'T is hard such passion to destroy,
But easy to deceive."

This lady was daughter of Sir Henry Lee, of Ditchley, ancestor of the present Dillon family. She was a cousin of Lord Rochester, and wrote an elegy on his death, in which she represents him as an angel. We have the pleasure of possessing a copy of Waller's Poems, on the blank leaf of which is written "Anne Wharton, given her by the Authore." Her husband was at that time not possessed of his title.

A "Mrs. Taylor," who appears to have been an acquaintance of Aphra Behn, has a song with the following beautiful termination. It is upon a rake whose person she admired, and whom, on account of his indiscriminate want of feeling, she is handsomely resolved not to love.

"My wearied heart, like Noah's dove,
In vain may seek for rest;
Finding no hope to fix, my love
Returns into my breast."

Next comes Aphra herself; and, we must say, affects and makes us admire her, beyond what we looked for. Her verses are natural and cordial, written in a masculine style, and yet womanly withal. If she had given us nothing but such

poetry as this, she would have been as much admired, and known among us all, to this day, as she consented to be among the rakes of her time. Her comedies indeed are alarming, and justly incurred the censure of Pope: though it is probable, that a thoughtless good-humour made her pen run over, rather than real licentiousness; and that, although free enough in her life, she was not so "extravagant and erring" as persons with less mind.

LOVE ARMED.

Song in Abdelazer; or, the Moor's Revenge.

"*Love in fantastic triumph sat,*
Whilst bleeding hearts around him flow'd,
For whom fresh pains he did create,
And strange tyrannic pow'r he shew'd.
From *thy* bright eyes he took his fires,
Which round about in sport he hurl'd;
But 't was from *mine* he took desires,
Enough t' undo the amorous world.

"From *me* he took his sighs and tears,
From *thee* his pride and cruelty;
From *me* his languishment and fears,
And every killing dart from *thee:*"

How musical is that!

"*Thus thou, and I, the God have arm'd,*
And set him up a deity;"

And how fine that!

But *my* poor heart alone is harm'd,
Whilst thine *the victor is*, and *free.*"

LOVE BEYOND SENSE.

Song in the Lucky Chance; or, an Alderman's Bargain.

"O Love! that stronger art than wine,
Pleasing delusion, witchery divine,
Wont to be prized above all wealth,
Disease that has more joys than health;
Tho' we blaspheme thee in our pain,
And of thy tyranny complain,
We all are better'd by thy reign.

"When full brute Appetite is fed,
And chok'd the glutton lies, and dead,
Thou new spirits dost dispense,
And fin'st the gross delights of sense.
Virtue's unconquerable aid,
That against nature can persuade;
And makes a roving mind retire
Within the bounds of just desire;
Cheerer of age, youth's kind unrest,
And half the heaven of the blest."

This "Half the heaven of the blest," is a beautiful variation on a beautiful couplet in Waller:—

"What know we of the blest above,
But that they sing, and that they love?"

LOVE AND HYMEN.

"In vain does Hymen, with religious vows,
Oblige his slaves to wear his chains with ease,
A privilege alone that Love allows;
'T is Love alone can make our fetters please.
The angry tyrant lays his yoke on all,
Yet in his fiercest rage is charming still:
Officious Hymen comes whene'er we call,
But haughty Love comes only when he will."

Aphra Behn is said to have been in love with Creech. It should be borne in mind by those who give an estimate of her character, that she passed her childhood among the planters of Surinam; no very good school for restraining or refining a lively temperament. Her relations are said to have been careful of her; but they died there, and she returned to England, her own mistress.

We now come to one of the numerous loves we possess among our grandmothers of old,—or rather not numerous, but select and such as keep fresh with us for ever, like the miniature of his ancestress, whom the Sultan took for a living beauty. This is ANNE, COUNTESS of WINCHELSEA (now written Winchilsea), daughter of Sir William Kingsmill, of Sidmonton, in the county of Southampton. "It is remarkable," says Mr. Wordsworth, as quoted by Mr. Dyce, "that excepting a passage or two in the Windsor Forest of Pope, and some delightful pictures in the poems of Lady Winchelsea, the poetry of the period intervening between the publication of the 'Paradise Lost,' and the 'Seasons,' does not contain a single new image of external nature."—This is a mistake; for Allan Ramsay preceded Thomson: but some of Lady Winchelsea's "delightful pictures" are indeed very fresh and natural. In the poem entitled *A Nocturnal Reverie*, she thus speaks of a summer night—

"*When freshen'd grass now bears itself upright,*
And makes cool banks to pleasing rest invite,

Whence springs the woodbind, and the bramble-rose,
And where the sleepy cowslip shelter'd grows;
Whilst now a paler hue the foxglove takes,
Yet chequers still with red the dusky brakes;
When scattered glowworms, but in twilight fine,
Shew trivial beauties watch their hour to shine;
Whilst Salisb'ry* stands the test of every light,
In perfect charms, and perfect virtue bright:
When odours which declin'd repelling day,
Thro' temperate air uninterrupted stray;
When darken'd groves their softest shadows wear,
And falling waters we distinctly hear;
When thro' the gloom more venerable shows
Some ancient fabric, awful in repose;
While sun-burnt hills their swarthy looks conceal,
And swelling hay-cocks thicken up the vale:
When the loos'd horse now, as his pasture leads,
Comes slowly grazing thro' the adjoining meads,
Whose stealing pace, and lengthen'd shade we fear,
Till torn-up forage in his teeth we hear;
When nibbling sheep at large pursue their food,
And unmolested kine rechew the cud;
When curlews cry beneath the village walls,
And to her straggling brood the partridge calls;
Their short-liv'd jubilee the creatures keep,
Which but endures whilst tyrant man does sleep;
When a sedate content the spirit feels,
And no fierce light disturbs, whilst it reveals;
But silent musings urge the mind to seek
Something too high for syllables to speak;
Till the free soul to a composedness charm'd,
Finding the elements of rage disarm'd,

---

* Frances Bennett, daughter of a gentleman in Buckinghamshire, and wife to James, fourth Earl of Salisbury.

O'er all below a solemn quiet grown,
Joys in th' inferior world, and thinks it like her own;
In such a night let me abroad remain,
Till morning breaks, *and all's confus'd again;*
Our cares, our toils, our clamours are renew'd,
Or pleasures, seldom reach'd, again pursu'd."

Mr. Dyce has not omitted the celebrated poem of the "Spleen," which attracted considerable attention in its day. It still deserves a place on every toilet, male and female.

"What art thou, Spleen, which everything dost ape?
Thou Proteus to abus'd mankind,
Who never yet thy real cause could find,
Or fix them to remain in one continued shape.

* * * * *

In the imperious wife thou vapeurs* art,
Which from o'er-heated passions rise
In clouds to the attractive brain;
Until descending thence again
Through the o'er-cast and showering eyes
Upon her husband's softened heart,
He the disputed point must yield,—
Something resign of the contested field,—
Till lordly man, born to imperial sway,
Compounds for peace to make that right away,
And woman, arm'd with spleen, does servilely obey.

"Patron thou art to every gross abuse,
The sullen husband's feign'd excuse,

---

* At present called "nerves," or "headache."

When the ill-humour with his wife he spends,
And bears recruited wit and spirits to his friends.
The son of Bacchus pleads thy pow'r,
As to the glass he still repairs;
Pretends but to remove thy cares,
Snatch from thy shade one gay and smiling hour,
And drown thy kingdom in a purple shower."

That is a fine couplet. Dryden, whom it is very like, would not have wished it better.

"When the coquette, whom every fool admires,
Would in variety be fair,
And changing hastily the scene
From light, impertinent, and vain,
Assumes a soft and melancholy air,
And of her eyes rebates the wandering fires:
The careless posture and the head reclin'd,
The thoughtful and composèd face,
Proclaiming the withdrawn, the absent mind,
Allows the fop more liberty to gaze,
Who gently *for the tender cause* inquires:—
The cause indeed is *a defect of sense,*
Yet is the spleen alleged, and still the dull pretence."

Lady Winchelsea is mentioned by Gay as one of the congratulators of Pope, when his Homer was finished:—

"And Winchelsea, still meditating song."

SPECIMENS OF BRITISH POETESSES.

No. II.

Miss Vanhomrigh, Lady Russell, Mrs. Manly, Mrs. Brereton, Mrs. Greville, Lady Henrietta O'Neil, Duchess of Devonshire, Miss Carter, Charlotte Smith, Miss Seward, and Mrs. Tighe.

THE verses of poor Miss VANHOMRIGH, who was in love with Swift, are not very good; but they serve to show the truth of her passion, which was that of an inexperienced girl of eighteen for a wit of forty-four. Swift had conversation enough to make a dozen sprightly young gentlemen; and, besides his wit and his admiration of her, she loved him for what she thought his love of truth. In her favour, also, he appears to have laid aside his *brusquerie* and fits of ill temper, till he found the matter too serious for his convenience.

"Still listening to his tuneful tongue,
The truths which angels might have sung
Divine imprest their gentle sway,
And sweetly stole my soul away.

My guide, instructor, lover, friend,
Dear names, in one idea blend;
Oh! still conjoin'd your incense rise,
And waft sweet odours to the skies."

Swift, who was already engaged, and with a woman too whom he loved, should have told her so. She discovered it, and died in a fit of indignation and despair. The volume, a little farther, contains some verses of the other lady (Miss Johnson) *On Jealousy*,—probably occasioned by the rival who was jealous of her. Poor Stella! She died also, after a longer, a closer, and more awful experience of Swift's extraordinary conduct; which, to this day, remains a mystery.

The Lady Russell, who wrote the verses at p. 149, to the memory of her husband, was most probably Elizabeth, one of the learned daughters of Sir Anthony Cook, and widow of John, Lord Russell, who was called up to the House of Lords in the lifetime of his father, Francis, Earl of Bedford, who died in 1585. The singular applicability of the last line to the mourning widowhood of a subsequent and more famous Lady Russell, has led commentators to mistake one husband for another. The concluding couplet is remarkable for shewing the effect to which real feeling turns the baldest common-places. Not that the words just alluded to are a common-place. They are the quintessence of pathos—

"Right noble twice, by virtue and by birth,
Of Heaven lov'd, and honour'd on the earth,
His country's hope, his kindred's chief delight,
My husband dear, more than this world his light,
Death hath me reft.—But I from death will take
His memory, to whom this tomb I make.
John was his name (ah was! wretch, must I say)
Lord Russell once, *now my tear-thirsty clay.*"

Gay Mrs. Centlivre follows Lady Russell, like a sprightly chambermaid after a gentlewoman. She is all for "the soldiers;" and talks of the pleasure of surrendering, like a hungry citadel. The specimen consists of her prologue to the *Bold Stroke for a Wife*. It is very good of its kind; gallant, and to the purpose; with that sort of air about it, as if it had been spoken by Madame Vestris, or by the fair authoress herself, in regimentals. But partial extracts would be awkward; and we have not place for more.

Mrs. De La Riviere Manly, who wrote the "Atalantis," and alternately "loved" and lampooned Sir Richard Steele (which was not so generous of her as her surrendering herself to the law to save her printer), has two copies of verses, in which we may observe the usual tendency of female writers to break through conventional common-places with some touches of nature. The least of them have an instinct of this sort, which does them honour, and sets them above the same class of writers in the

other sex. The mixture, however, sometimes has a ludicrous effect. Mrs. Manly, panegyrizing a certain "J. M——e, Esq., of Worcester College," begins with this fervid and conversational apostrophe:—

> "Oxford,—for all thy fops and smarts,
> Let *this prodigious youth* atone;
> While others frisk and dress at hearts,
> He makes thy better part his own."

The concluding stanza is better, and indeed contains a noble image. Others, she says, advance in their knowledge by slow degrees,—

> "But his vast mind, completely form'd,
> Was thoroughly finish'd when begun;
> *So all at once the world was warm'd*
> *On the great birth-day of the sun.*"

Mrs. Manly is supposed to have been the Sappho of the Tatler. She wrote political papers in the *Examiner* of that day, and courageously shared in its responsibilities to the law.

A Mrs. Brereton, daughter of a Welsh gentleman, was author, it seems, of a well-known epigram on Beau Nash's picture "at full length," between the busts of Newton and Pope. It forms the conclusion of a poem of six stanzas, the whole of which are very properly given by Mr. Dyce, but from which it has usually been separated, and with some

difference in the reading. The stanza is as follows:

> "The picture, plac'd the busts between,
> Adds to the thought much strength;
> *Wisdom and Wit are little seen,*
> *But Folly 's at full length.*"

Mrs. Pilkington, well known for departures, not in the best taste, from the ordinary modes of her sex, tells us that—

> "Lying is an occupation
> Used by all who mean to rise."

Poor soul! We fear she practised a good deal of it to little purpose. She had a foolish husband, and was beset by very untoward circumstances, to which she fell a worse prey than she would have us think. But the weakest of women are so unequally treated by the existing modes of society, that we hate to think anything unhandsome of them.

Not so of my Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, who was at once so clever, so bold, so well off, and so full of sense of every sort but the sense of delicacy, that she provokes us to speak as plainly as herself. But we have said enough of her ladyship in another place.

The verses of Mrs. Sheridan, mother of the famous Sheridan, and author of "Sidney Bidulph," are not so good as her novels. Miss Jones has a

compliment to Pope, which Pope himself may have admired for its own sake :—

> "Alas! I'd live unknown, unenvied too;
> 'T is more than Pope, with all his wit, can do."

"Miss Jones," says a note in Boswell, quoted by Mr. Dyce, "lived at Oxford, and was often of our parties. She was a very ingenious poetess, and published a volume of poems; and on the whole, was a most sensible, agreeable, and amiable woman. She was sister to the Rev. River Jones, Chanter of Christ-church Cathedral, at Oxford, and Johnson used to call her the *Chantress*. I have heard him often address her in this passage from Il Penseroso, '*Thee, chantress, oft the woods among, I woo,*' &c."

This puts in a pleasant light both Johnson and the poetess; but in the earlier collection of ladies' verses, alluded to at the commencement of this paper, there are poems attributed to her of astounding coarseness.

Frances Brooke, author of *Rosina*, of *Lady Julia Mandeville*, &c. was a better poetess in her prose than her verse. Her *Ode to Health*, given by Mr. Dyce, is not much. We should have preferred a song out of *Rosina*. But we will venture to affirm, that she must have written a capital love-letter. These clergymen's daughters (her father was a Rev. Mr. Moore) contrive somehow to have a double zest in those matters. Mrs. Brooke had once a public

dispute with Garrick, in which she had the rare and delightful candour to confess herself in the wrong.

In the well-known *Prayer for Indifference*, by MRS. GREVILLE, is a stanza, which has the point of an epigram with all the softness of a gentle truth:—

> "Nor peace, nor ease, the heart can know,
> That, like the needle true,
> Turns at the touch of joy or woe,
> But turning, trembles too."

There is a good deal about MRS. GREVILLE in the Memoirs of Madame D'Arblay. She was married to a man of fortune, and of much intellectual pretension, but not happily.

Two poems by LADY HENRIETTA O'NEIL, daughter of Viscount Dungarvon, and wife of O'Neil, of Slane's Castle, are taken out of her friend MRS. CHARLOTTE SMITH'S novel of *Desmond*,—a work, by the way, from which Sir Walter Scott borrowed the foundation of his character of Waverley, and the name besides. In a novel by the same lady, we forget which, is the first sketch of the sea-side incident in the *Antiquary*, where the hero saves the life of Miss Wardour. Lady Henrietta's verses do her credit, but imply a good deal of suffering. One "To the Poppy," begins with the following melodious piece of melancholy:—

"Not for the promise of the laboured field,
Not for the good the yellow harvests yield,
I bend at Ceres' shrine;
For dull to humid eyes appear
The golden glories of the year:
Alas! a melancholy worship 's mine:

"I hail the Goddess for her scarlet flower," &c.

In other words, the flourishing lady of quality took opium; which, we suspect, was the case with her poorer friend. We believe the world would be astonished, if they knew the names of all the people of genius, and of all the rich people, as well as poor, who have had recourse to the same consolatory drug. Thousands take it, of whose practice the world have no suspicion; and yet many of those persons, able to endure perhaps, on that very account, what requires all the patience of those who abstain from it, have quarrelled with such writers as the fair novelist, for trying to amend the evils which tempted them to its use.

Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, who was "made," according to Gibbon, "for something better than a Duchess," is justly celebrated for her poem on the *Passage of Mount St. Gothard*, which awakened the enthusiasm of Coleridge. There are fine lines in it, and a vital liberality of sentiment. The writer seems to breathe out her fervent words like a young Muse, her lips glowing with health and the morning dew.

"Yet let not these rude paths be coldly traced,
Let not these wilds with listless steps be trod;
Here fragrance scorns not to perfume the waste,
Here charity uplifts the mind to God."

At stanza twenty it is said with beautiful truth and freshness,—

"The torrent pours, and *breathes* its glittering spray."

Stanza twenty-four was the one that excited the raptures of Coleridge,

"And hail the chapel! hail the platform wild!
Where Tell directed the avenging dart,
With well-strung arm that first preserv'd his child,
Then wing'd the arrow to the tyrant's heart."

"Oh, lady!" cried the poet, on hearing this animated apostrophe;—

"Oh lady! nurs'd in pomp and pleasure,
Where learnt you that heroic measure?"

This is the burden of an ode addressed to her by Coleridge. The Duchess of Devonshire, mother of the present Duke, who has proved himself a worthy son by his love of the beauties of nature and his sympathies with his fellow-creatures, may well have been a glorious being to look at, writing such verses as those, and being handsome besides. It was she of whom it is said, that a man at an election once exclaimed, astonished at her loveliness, "Well,—if I were God Almighty, I'd make her Queen of Heaven."

Exit the Duchess; and enter, in this curious alternation of grave and gay, the staid solemnity of Miss Carter, a stoic philosopher, who died at the age of eighty-nine. The volume contains her *Ode to Wisdom*, somewhat bitter against—

> "The coxcomb sneer, the stupid lie
> Of ignorance and spite:"

and some *Lines to a Gentleman on his intending to cut down a Grove*, which are pleasanter. A Hamadryad who is made to remonstrate on the occasion, says—

> "Reflect, before the fatal axe
> My threatened doom has wrought;
> Nor sacrifice to sensual taste
> *The nobler growth of thought.*"

This line, by which thoughts are made to grow in the mind like a solemn grove of trees, is very striking. And the next stanza is good:—

> "Not all the glowing fruits that blush
> On India's sunny coast,
> Can recompense thee for the worth
> Of one idea lost."

Miss Carter translated *Epictetus;* and was much, and we believe deservedly, admired for the soundness of her acquirements. We were startled at reading somewhere the other day that, in her youth, she had not only the wisdom of a Pallas, but the look of a Hebe. Healthy no doubt she was, and possessed of a fine constitution. She was probably also hand-

some; but Hebe and a hook nose are in our minds impossible associations.

CHARLOTTE SMITH has been mentioned before. Some of her novels will last, and her sonnets with them, each perhaps aided by the other. There is nothing great in her; but she is natural and touching, and has hit, in the music of her sorrows, upon some of those chords which have been awakened equally, though not so well, in all human bosoms.

"SONNET.

Written at the Close of Spring.

"The garlands fade that Spring so lately wove,
Each simple flower, which she had nurs'd in dew,
Anemones that spangled every grove,
The primrose wan, and harebell mildly blue.
No more shall violets linger in the dell,
Or purple orchis variegate the plain,
Till Spring again shall call forth every bell,
And dress with humid hands her wreaths again.
Ah, poor humanity! so frail, so fair,
Are the fond visions of thy early day,
Till tyrant passion, and corrosive care,
Bid all thy fairy colours fade away!
Another May new buds and flowers shall bring;
Ah! why has happiness no second Spring?"

"SONNET.

To the Moon.

"Queen of the silver bow! by thy pale beam,
Alone and pensive, I delight to stray,
And watch thy shadow trembling in the stream,
Or mark the floating clouds that cross thy way.

And while I gaze, thy mild and placid light
  Sheds a soft calm upon my troubled breast;
And oft I think, fair planet of the night,
  That in thy orb the wretched may have rest;
The sufferers of the earth perhaps may go,
  Released by death, to thy benignant sphere,
And the sad children of despair and woe
  Forget in thee their cup of sorrow here.
Oh! that I soon may reach thy world serene,
Poor wearied pilgrim in this toiling scene!"

"SONNET.

"Sighing I see yon little troop at play,
  By sorrow yet untouch'd, unhurt by care,
While free and sportive they enjoy to-day,
  'Content and careless of to-morrow's fare.'
O happy age! when Hope's unclouded ray
  Lights their green path, and prompts their simple mirth,
Ere yet they feel the thorns that lurking lay
  To wound the wretched pilgrims of the earth,
  Making them rue the hour that gave them birth,
  And threw them on a world so full of pain,
Where prosperous folly treads on patient worth,
  And to deaf pride misfortune pleads in vain!
Ah! for their future fate how many fears
Oppress my heart, *and fill mine eyes with tears!*"

Mrs. Smith's love of botany, as Mr. Dyce observes, "has led her, in several of her pieces, to paint a variety of flowers with a minuteness and delicacy rarely equalled." This is very true. No young lady, fond of books and flowers, would be without Charlotte Smith's poems, if once acquainted with them. The following couplet, from the piece

entitled "Saint Monica," shows her tendency to this agreeable miniature painting:—

> "From the *mapp'd* lichen, to the *plumed* weed;
> From *thready* mosses to the *veined* flow'r."

Mrs. Smith suffered bitterly from the failure of her husband's mercantile speculations, and the consequent troubles they both incurred from the law; which, according to her representations, were aggravated in a scandalous manner by guardians and executors. Lawyers cut a remarkable figure in her novels; and her complaints upon these her domestic grievances, overflow, in a singular, though not unpardonable or unmoving manner, in her prefaces. To one of the later edition of her poems, published when she was alive, is prefixed a portrait of her, under which, with a pretty feminine pathos, which a generous reader would be loth to call vanity, she has quoted the following lines from Shakspeare:—

> "Oh, Grief has chang'd me since you saw me last;
> And heavy hours, with Time's deforming hand,
> Have written strange defeatures on my face."

Miss Seward is affected and superfluous; but now and then she writes a good line; for example:—

> "And sultry silence brooded o'er the hills."

And she can paint a natural picture. We can testify to the strange, unheard-of luxury, which she

describes, *of rising to her books before day on a winter's morning.*

"SONNET.

December Morning, 1782.

"I love to rise ere gleams the tardy light,
Winter's pale dawn,—and as warm fires illume
And cheerful tapers shine around the room,
Thro' misty windows bend my musing sight,
Where, round the dusky lawn, the mansions white,
With shutters clos'd peer faintly thro' the gloom,
That slow recedes; while yon gray spires assume,
Rising from their dark pile, an added height
By indistinctness given.—Then to decree
The grateful thoughts to God, ere they unfold
To Friendship, or the Muse, or seek with glee
Wisdom's rich page—O hours! more worth than gold,
By whose blest use we lengthen life, and, free
From drear decays of age, outlive the old!"

Miss Seward ought to have married, and had a person superior to herself for her husband. She would have lost her affectation; doubled her good things; and, we doubt not, have made an entertaining companion for all hours, grave or gay. The daughter of the Editor of "Beaumont and Fletcher" was not a mean person, though lost among the egotisms of her native town, and the praises of injudicious friends. Meanwhile, it is something too much to hear her talk of translating an Ode of Horace "while her hair is dressing!"

The *Psyche* of MRS. TIGHE has a languid beauty, probably resembling that of her person. This

lady, who was the daughter of the Rev. William Blachford, died in her 37th year, of consumption. The face prefixed to the volume containing her poem is very handsome. The greater part of the poem itself is little worth, except as a strain of elegance; but now and then we meet with a fancy not unworthy a pupil of Spenser. Cupid, as he lies sleeping, has a little suffusing light, stealing from between his eyelids.

"The friendly curtain of indulgent sleep
Disclos'd not yet his eyes' resistless sway,
But from their silky veil there seem'd to peep
Some brilliant glances with a soften'd ray,
Which o'er his features exquisitely play,
And all his polish'd limbs suffuse with light.
Thus thro' some narrow space the azure day,
Sudden its cheerful rays diffusing bright,
Wide darts its lucid beams to gild the brow of night."

This is the prettiest "peep o' day boy," which has appeared in Ireland.

SPECIMENS OF BRITISH POETESSES.

No. III.

Mrs. Hunter, Mrs. Barbauld, Lady Ann Barnard, and Hannah More.

Mrs. Hunter, wife of the celebrated John Hunter the surgeon, and sister of the late Sir Everard Home, published a volume of poems, in which were a number of songs that were set to music, some of them by Haydn, who was intimate with her. Among the latter is one extracted by Mr. Dyce, beginning—

"The season comes when first we met."

It is one of the composer's most affecting melodies, and not too much loaded with science. It is to be found in an elegant selection of airs, trios, &c., in two volumes, worthy the attention, and not beyond the skill of the amateur, published by Mr. Sainsbury, and entitled the *Vocal Anthology*. Mrs. Hunter was

author of the well-known Death Song of a Cherokee Indian,

"The sun sets in night, and the stars shun the day."

A simple and cordial energy, made up of feeling and good sense, is the characteristic of the better part of her writings.

Hester Lynch Piozzi, the friend and hostess of Johnson, was the daughter of John Salusbury, Esq. of Bodvel in Caernarvonshire. Her first husband was Johnson's friend, Thrale, an eminent brewer; her second, Signor Piozzi, a teacher of music. The superiority of *The Three Warnings* to her other poetical pieces, excited a suspicion, as Mr. Dyce observes, that Johnson assisted her in its composition; but there was no foundation for the suspicion. The style is a great deal too natural and lively for Johnson. If anything were to be suspected of the poem, it would be that Mrs. Thrale had found the original in some French author, the lax metre and versification resembling those of the second order of French tales in verse.

Mrs. Radcliffe's verses are unworthy of her romances. In the latter she was what Mr. Mathias called her, "a mighty magician;"—or not to lose the fine sound of his whole phrase,—"the mighty magician of Udolpho." In her verses, she is a tin-

selled nymph in a pantomine, calling up common-places with a wand.

Anna Lætitia Barbauld is one of the best poetesses in the book. It is curious, by the way, to observe how the name of Anne predominates in this list of females. There are seventy-eight writers in all, besides anonymous ones, and two or three whose Christian names are not known; and out of these seventy-eight, eighteen have the name of Anne. The name that prevails next, is Mary; and then Elizabeth. The popularity of Anne is perhaps of Protestant origin, and began with Anne Boleyn. It served at once to proclaim the new opinions, to eschew the reigning Catholic appellation of Mary, and, at the same time, to appear modestly Scriptural. But the sweet gentleness of the name of Mary was not to be put down, even by the help of the poor bigot of Smithfield.

Mr. Dyce informs us that Mr. Fox used to speak with admiration of Mrs. Barbauld's talents, and had got her songs by heart. This was an applause worth having. We must extract the whole of her *Summer Evening's Meditation*, if it is only for the sake of some noble lines in it, and to present to the reader's imagination the picture of a fine-minded female wrapt up in thought and devotion. She is like the goddess in Milton's Penseroso. The two lines marked in capitals are sublime.

A SUMMER EVENING'S MEDITATION.

"'T is past! the sultry tyrant of the south
Has spent his short-liv'd rage: more grateful hours
Move silent on: the skies no more repel
The dazzled sight, but, with mild maiden beams
Of temper'd light, invite the cherish'd eye
To wander o'er their sphere; where hung aloft
Dian's bright crescent, "like a silver bow
New strung in heaven," lifts high its beamy horns,
Impatient for the night, and seems to push
Her brother down the sky. Fair Venus shines,
Even in the eye of day; with sweetest beam
Propitious shines, *and shakes a trembling flood*
Of soften'd radiance from her dewy locks.
The shadows spread apace; while meeken'd Eve,
Her cheek yet warm with blushes, slow retires
Thro' the Hesperian gardens of the west,
And shuts the gates of day. 'T is now the hour
When Contemplation, from her sunless haunts,
The cool damp grotto, or the lonely depth
Of unpierc'd woods, where wrapt in solid shade
She mus'd away the gaudy hours of noon,
And, fed on thoughts *unripen'd by the sun,*
Moves forward; and with radiant finger points
To yon blue concave swell'd by breath divine,
Where, one by one, the living eyes of heaven
Awake, quick kindling o'er the face of ether
One boundless blaze; ten thousand trembling fires,
And dancing lustres, where th' unsteady eye,
Restless and dazzled, wanders unconfin'd
O'er all this field of glories: spacious field,
And worthy of the master: he whose hand,
With hieroglyphics elder than the Nile,

Inscrib'd the mystic tablet; hung on high
To public gaze; and said, Adore, O man,
The finger of thy God! From what pure wells
Of milky light, what soft o'erflowing urn,
Are all these lamps so fill'd? these friendly lamps
For ever streaming o'er the azure deep
To point our path, and light us to our home.
How soft they slide along their lucid spheres!
And, silent as the foot of time, fulfil
Their destin'd course! Nature's self is hush'd,
And, but a scatter'd leaf, which rustles thro'
The thick-wove foliage, not a sound is heard
To break the midnight air; *tho' the rais'd ear*
Intensely listening, drinks in every breath.
How deep the silence, yet how loud the praise!
But are they silent all? *or is there not*
A tongue in every star that talks with man,
And wooes him to be wise? nor wooes in vain:
THIS DEAD OF MIDNIGHT IS THE NOON OF THOUGHT,
AND WISDOM MOUNTS HER ZENITH WITH THE STARS.
At this still hour the self-collected soul
Turns inward, *and beholds a stranger there*
Of high descent, and more than mortal rank;
An embryo God; a spark of fire divine,
Which must burn on for ages, when the sun
(Fair transitory creature of a day)
Has clos'd his golden eye, and, wrapt in shades,
Forgets his wonted journey thro' the east.

"*Ye citadels of light, and seats of Gods!*
Perhaps my future home, from whence the soul,
Revolving periods past, may oft look back,
With recollected tenderness, on all
The various busy scenes she left below,
Its deep-laid projects and its strange events,

As on some fond and doting tale that sooth'd
Her infant hours—O be it lawful now
To tread the hallow'd circle of your courts,
And with mute wonder and delighted awe
Approach your burning confines!—Seiz'd in thought,
On fancy's wild and roving wing I sail
From the green borders of the peopled earth,
And the pale moon, her duteous fair attendant;
From solitary Mars; from the vast orb
Of Jupiter, whose huge gigantic bulk
Dances in ether like the lightest leaf;
To the dim verge, the suburbs of the system,
Where cheerless Saturn, midst his watery moons,
Girt with a lucid zone, in gloomy pomp,
Sits like an exil'd monarch: fearless thence
I launch into the trackless deeps of space,
Where, burning round, ten thousand suns appear,
Of elder beam; which ask no leave to shine
Of our terrestrial star, nor borrow light
From the proud regent of our scanty day;
Sons of the morning, first-born of creation,
And only less than Him who marks their track,
And guides their fiery wheels. Here must I stop,
Or is there aught beyond? What hand unseen
Impels me onward thro' the glowing orbs
Of habitable nature, far remote,
To the dread confines of eternal night,
To solitudes of vast unpeopled space,
The deserts of creation wide and wild,
Where embryo systems and unkindled suns
Sleep in the womb of chaos? fancy droops,
And thought astonish'd stops her bold career.
But, O thou mighty Mind! whose powerful word
Said, Thus let all things be, and thus they were,
Where shall I seek thy presence? how unblam'd

Invoke thy dread perfection ?———
Have the broad eyelids of the morn beheld thee ?
Or does the beamy shoulder of Orion
Support thy throne ? O look with pity down
On erring, guilty man! not in thy names
Of terror clad; not with those thunders arm'd
That conscious Sinai felt, when fear appall'd
The scatter'd tribes! Thou hast a gentler voice,
That whispers comfort to the swelling heart,
Abash'd, yet longing to behold her Maker.

"But now, my soul, unus'd to stretch her powers
In flight so daring, drops her weary wing,
And seeks again the known accustom'd spot,
Drest up with sun, and shade, and lawns, and streams;
A mansion fair and spacious for its guest,
And full, replete, with wonders. Let me here,
Content and grateful, wait the appointed time,
And ripen for the skies. The hour will come
When all these splendours, bursting on my sight,
Shall stand unveil'd, and to my ravish'd sense
Unlock the glories of the world unknown."

Mrs. Barbauld, like other persons of genuine fancy, had great good sense. Mr. Hazlitt has eulogized her *Essay on the Inconsistency of our Expectations.* If ever she committed a mistake, she was the sort of woman to retrieve it, or to bear the consequences in the best manner. It is generally understood that she did make one when she married Mr. Barbauld,—a "little Presbyterian parson," as Johnson indignantly called him. Not that he was not a good man, but he was very much her inferior. "Such tricks hath strong imagination,"

even when united with the strongest understanding. To judge by her writings (and by what better things can we judge, if they have the right look of sincerity?) Mrs. Barbauld ought to have had a Raleigh or Sidney for her lover. She had both intellect and passion enough to match a spirit heroical. The song beginning

"Come here, fond youth, whoe'er thou be,"

has all the devoted energy of the old poets.

O Lady Anne Barnard, thou that didst write the ballad of "Auld Robin Gray," which must have suffused more eyes with tears of the first water than any other ballad that ever was written, we hail, and pay thee homage, knowing thee now for the first time by thy real name! But why wast thou desirous of being only a woman of quality, when thou oughtst to have been (as nature intended thee) nothing but the finest gentlewoman of thy time? And what bad example was it, that, joining with the sophistications of thy rank, did make thee so anxious to keep thy secret from the world, and ashamed to be spoken of as an authoress? Shall habit and education be so strong with those who ought to form instead of being formed by them? Shall they render such understandings as thine insensible to the humiliation of the fancied dignity of concealment, and the poor pride of being ashamed to give pleasure?

The following is the interesting account given by

Lady Anne of the birth and fortunes of her ballad: for interesting it is, and we felt delighted to meet with it; though our delight was damped by the considerations just mentioned. We used to think we could walk barefoot to Scotland to see the author of the finest ballad in the world. We now began to doubt; not because we feared the fate of the person who endeavoured to "entrap the truth" from her (though the reception he met with, we think, was hard, considering that an author at once popular and anonymous is not likely to have escaped with too nice a conscience in matters of veracity), but because we lose our inclination to see uncommon people who condescend to wear common masks. We preface her Ladyship's account with Mr. Dyce's introduction:—

"Lady Anne Barnard, (born ....., died 1825) sister of the late Earl of Balcarras, and wife of Sir Andrew Barnard, wrote the charming song of Auld Robin Gray. A quarto tract, edited by "the Ariosto of the North," and circulated among the members of the Bannatyne Club, contains the original ballad, as corrected by Lady Anne, and two continuations by the same authoress; while the Introduction consists almost entirely of a very interesting letter from her to the Editor, dated July 1823, part of which I take the liberty of inserting here:—

"'Robin Gray,' so called from its being the name of the old herd at Balcarras, was born soon after the close of the year 1771. My sister Margaret had married, and accompanied her husband to London; I was melancholy, and endeavoured to amuse myself by attempting a few poetical trifles. There was an ancient Scotch melody, of which I was passionately fond; ——, who lived before your day, used to sing it to us at Balcarras.

She did not object to its having improper words, though I did. I longed to sing old Sophy's air to different words, and give to its plaintive tones some little history of virtuous distress in humble life, such as might suit it. While attempting to effect this in my closet, I called to my little sister, now Lady Hardwicke, who was the only person near me: 'I have been writing a ballad, my dear; I am oppressing my heroine with many misfortunes. I have already sent her Jamie to sea—and broken her father's arm—and made her mother fall sick—and given her Auld Robin Gray for her lover; but I wish to load her with a fifth sorrow within the four lines, poor thing! Help me to one.'—'Steal the cow, sister Anne,' said the little Elizabeth. The cow was immediately *lifted* by me, and the song completed. At our fireside, and amongst our neighbours, 'Auld Robin Gray' was always called for. I was pleased in secret with the approbation it met with; but such was *my dread* of being suspected of writing *anything*, perceiving the shyness it created in those who could write *nothing*, that I carefully kept my own secret. * * * *

"Meanwhile, little as this matter seems to have been worthy of a dispute, it afterwards became a party question between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. 'Robin Gray' was either a very ancient ballad, composed perhaps by David Rizzio, and a great curiosity, or a very modern matter, and no curiosity at all. I was persecuted to avow whether I had written it or not,—where I had got it. Old Sophy kept my counsel, and I kept my own, in spite of the gratification of seeing a reward of twenty guineas offered in the newspapers to the person who should ascertain the point past a doubt, and the still more flattering circumstance of a visit from Mr. Jerningham, secretary to the Antiquarian Society, who endeavoured to entrap the truth from me in a manner I took amiss. Had he asked me the question obligingly, I should have told him the fact distinctly and confidentially. The annoyance, however, of this important ambassador from the antiquaries, was amply repaid

to me by the noble exhibition of the 'Ballat of Auld Robin Gray's Courtship,' as performed by dancing-dogs under my window. It proved its popularity from the highest to the lowest, and gave me pleasure while I hugged myself in my obscurity."

"The two versions of the second part were written many years after the first; in them, Auld Robin Grey falls sick,—confesses that he himself stole the cow, in order to force Jenny to marry him—leaves to Jamie all his possessions,—dies,—and the young couple, of course, are united. Neither of the continuations is given here, because, though both are beautiful, they are very inferior to the original tale, and greatly injure its effect."

AULD ROBIN GRAY.

"When the sheep are in the fauld, when the cows come hame,
When a' the weary world to quiet rest are gane,
The woes of my heart fa' in showers frae my ee,
Unken'd by my gudeman, who soundly sleeps by me.

"Young Jamie loo'd me weel, and sought me for his bride;
But saving ae crown-piece, he'd naething else beside.
To make the crown a pound, my Jamie gaed to sea;
And the crown and the pound, O they were baith for me!

"Before he had been gane a twelvemonth and a day,
My father brak his arm, our cow was stown away;
My mother she fell sick—my Jamie was at sea—
And Auld Robin Gray, oh! he came a-courting me.

"My father cou'dna work—my mother cou'dna spin;
I toil'd day and night, but their bread I cou'dna win;
Auld Rob maintain'd them baith, and, wi' tears in his ee,
Said, 'Jenny, oh! for their sakes, will you marry me?'

"My heart it said Na, and I look'd for Jamie back;
But hard blew the winds, and his ship was a wrack:
His ship it was a wrack! Why didna Jamie dee?
Or, wherefore am I spar'd to cry out, Woe is me!

"My father argued sair—*my mother didna speak,*
But she looked in my face till my heart was like to break;
They gied him my hand, but my heart was in the sea;
And so Auld Robin Gray, he was gudeman to me.

"I hadna been his wife, a week but only four,
When mournfu' as I sat on the stane at my door,
I saw my Jamie's ghaist—I cou'dna think it he,
Till he said, 'I'm come hame, my love, to marry thee!'

"O sair, sair did we greet, and mickle say of a';
Ae kiss we took, nae mair—I bad him gang awa.
I wish that I were dead, but I'm no like to dee;
For O, I am but young to cry out, Woe is me!

"*I gang like a ghaist, and I carena much to spin;*
I darena think o' Jamie, for that wad be a sin.
But I will do my best a gude wife aye to be,
For Auld Robin Gray, oh! he is sae kind to me."

Such is the most pathetic ballad that ever was written; and such are the marriages which it is not accounted a sin to consecrate. The old man in this scene of moral perplexity is good and generous in everything but his dotage; the parents not only take themselves for kind ones, but are so, with the exception of their will to sacrifice their child; and ignorance and example excuse all three! Finally, the poor slaves who suffer from such abuses, and the cleverer, but in some respects not better taught ones, who think them to be tolerated out of some fear of ill or envy of alteration, agree to go on calling this world a "vale of tears," they themselves taking care all the while to keep up a proper quantity of the

supply! To run indignant pens into such heaps of absurdity is surely to prepare for their breaking up.

Miss Hannah More, a lady not out of harmony with these discords which mankind have been so long taking for their melancholy music, is the one that comes next. It is the first time we ever read any of her verses; and she has fairly surprised us, not only with some capital good sense, but with liberal and feeling sentiments! How could a heart, capable of uttering such things, get encrusted with Calvinism! and that, too, not out of fear and bad health, but in full possession, as it should seem, both of cheerfulness and sensibility! Oh, strange effects of example and bringing up! when humanity itself can be made to believe in the divineness of what is inhuman! "Sweet Sensibility!" cries our fair advocate of eternal punishment—

"Sweet Sensibility! thou keen delight!
Unprompted moral! sudden sense of right!
Perception exquisite! fair virtue's seed!
Thou quick precursor of the liberal deed!
Thou hasty conscience! reason's blushing morn!
Instinctive kindness ere reflection 's born!
Prompt sense of equity! to thee belongs
The swift redress of unexamin'd wrongs!
Eager to serve, the cause perhaps untried,
But always apt to choose the suffering side!
To those who know thee not, no words can paint,
And those who know thee, know all words are faint."

And again:—

"Since life's best joys consist in peace and ease,
And tho' but few can serve, yet all may please,
O let th' ungentle spirit learn from hence,
A small unkindness is a great offence."

The whole poem, with the exception of some objections to preachers of benevolence like Sterne (who must be taken, like the fall of the dew, in their general effect upon the mass of the world) is full of good sense and feeling; though what the fair theologian guards us against in our estimation of complexional good nature, is to be carried a good deal farther than she supposes. "As Feeling," she says,—

"——— tends to good, or leans to ill,
It gives fresh force to vice or principle;
'T is not a gift peculiar to the good,
'T is often but a virtue of the blood;
And what would seem Compassion's moral flow,
Is but a circulation swift or slow."

True; and what would seem religion's happy flow is often nothing better. But this argues nothing against religion or compassion. Whatever tends to secure the happiest flow of the blood provides best for the ends of virtue, if happiness be virtue's object. A man, it is true, may *begin* with being happy, on the mere strength of the purity and vivacity of his pulse: children do so; but he must have derived his constitution from very virtuous, temperate, and

happy parents indeed, and be a great fool to boot, and wanting in the commonest sympathies of his nature, if he can continue happy, and yet be a bad man: and then he could not be bad, in the worst sense of the word, for his defects would excuse him. It is time for philosophy and true religion to know one another, and not hesitate to follow the most impartial truths into their consequences. If "a small unkindness is a great offence," what could Miss Hannah More have said to the infliction of eternal punishment? Or are God and his ways eternally to be represented as something so different from the best attributes of humanity, that the wonder must be, how humanity can survive in spite of the mistake? The truth is, that the circulation of Miss More's own blood was a better thing than all her doctrines put together; and luckily it is a much more universal inheritance. The heart of man is constantly sweeping away the errors he gets into his brain.

There is a good deal of sense and wit in the extract from *Florio, a Tale for Fine Gentlemen and Fine Ladies;* but Miss More is for attributing the vices of disingenuousness, sneering, and sensuality, to freethinkers exclusively; which is disingenuous on her own part; as if these vices were not shared by the inconsistent of all classes. She herself sneers in the very act of denouncing sneerers; nor did we ever know that a joke was spared by the orthodox when they could get one.

We must now bring our extracts to a conclusion. There are some agreeable specimens of Miss Baillie; an admirable ballad on the Wind, attributed to Mr. Wordsworth's sister; and some pieces by Miss Landon and Mrs. Hemans, two popular writers, who would have brought their pearls to greater perfection if they had concentrated their faculties a little, and been content not to manufacture so many. But as these ladies bring us among their living contemporaries, and criticism becomes a matter of great delicacy, we must resist the temptation of being carried further.

DUCHESS OF ST. ALBANS, AND MARRIAGES FROM THE STAGE.

Comic actors and actresses more engaging to the recollection than tragic.—Charles the Second and Nell Gwynn.—Marriage of Harriett Mellon with the Duke of St. Albans and Mr. Coutts.—Marriages of Lucretia Bradshaw with Mr. Folkes, of Anastasia Robinson with Lord Peterborough, Beard the singer with Lady Henrietta Herbert, Lavinia Fenton with the Duke of Bolton, Mary Woffington with Captain Cholmondeley, Signor Gallini the dancer with Lady Elizabeth Bertie, O'Brien the comedian with Lady Susan Fox, Elizabeth Linley with Richard Brinsley Sheridan, Elizabeth Farren with the Earl of Derby, Louisa Brunton with Earl Craven, Mary Catherine Bolton with Lord Thurlow.—Remarks on Marriages from the Stage.

Besides the interest in such subjects, which lies below the surface, most people are willing to hear of actors and actresses. They are a link between the domesticities which they represent, and the public life to which they become allied by the representation. Their talent (generally speaking) is not felt to be of a rarity or happiness calculated to excite envy; their animal spirits are welcomed the more

for that drawback; and the matters they deal with brings us into their society as if into their own houses, humours, and daily life. Hence, in reading accounts of them, we naturally incline more to the comic or familiar individuals among them, than to the tragic; and more to the women than the men. We like to hear the name of Betterton; but Cibber, somehow, is the more welcome. We care little for Quin the tragedian; but Quin the good fellow, the boon companion, the deliverer of Thomson from the spunging-house, is dear to us. Even Garrick's name is injured by the footing he obtained in high life. We are not sure whether he was not too prosperous to be happy; too much compelled to bow, and deteriorate himself, into the airs of a common gentleman. On the other hand, though Foote was a man of birth, we have no misgivings about Foote (except on the moral score). He always seems "taking off" somebody, or cracking jokes. Bannister, Dodd, Parsons, are hearty names; and as to women,—Mrs. Siddons, it is true, "queens it" apart; but, somehow, we are inclined to let her, and leave her. On the other hand, who ever tires of the names of Oldfield, and Bracegirdle, and Woffington? All the flutters of the fans of two centuries, and all the solid merits of bodices and petticoats, come down to us in their names; chequering Covent Garden like chintz, and bringing along with them the periwigged and scented glories of the Congreves and Steeles. Who would not willingly hear

more of "Mistress Knipp," whom the snug and didactic Pepys detained with him a whole night on purpose to teach her his song of "Beauty, retire?" Mrs. Jordan's laugh beat even the *petit ris folâtre* (the little giddy laugh) of Madame d'Albret, which Marot says was enough to raise a man from the dead. At least we are not sure that there was a heart in the giddiness of the one, but who doubts it that ever heard the other? And poor Nell Gwynn, "bred up to serve strong waters to the gentlemen" (as she humbly said of her tavern life), what a corner has not virtue in its heart to store her memory in, for the vindication of natural goodness, and the rebuke of the uncharitable? She was the only one of Charles's mistresses whose claim of fidelity towards him one can have any faith in. We saw not long ago, in some book, a charge made against that prince, of uttering, as the last sentence on his death-bed, the words "Don't let poor Nelly starve." They were adduced as a triumphant proof of his irreligion and profligacy, and of his being wicked to the last. Why, they were the most Christian words he is ever known to have spoken. They showed, that with all the selfishness induced by his evil breeding, he could muster up heart enough in the agonies of death, and at what might be thought the most fearful of hazards, to think of a fellow-creature with sympathy, and that, too, in the humblest of his circle. But he recognised in her a loving nature, —the only one, most likely, he had ever met with.

It is a curious set-off against the supposed infe-

riority of the St. Albans' descent from Charles the Second, to those of the Richmonds and others, that the chances of Nelly's constancy are greater than can be reckoned upon with the finer ladies, who fancied themselves qualified to despise her. She thought so herself; and so will every one who knows their histories. The Lenoxes and Fitzroys (and Beauclercs too) have since got plenty of royal blood in their veins through other channels, as far as any such channels can be depended on: and, indeed, the swarthy complexion of Charles (derived from the Medici family) is still pointed at as distinguishing his descendants in more than one branch, though we believe the Beauclercs have it most visibly. Charles Fox had it through his mother (a Lenox); but Topham Beauclerc, Dr. Johnson's friend, resembled his lawless ancestors, if we are not mistaken, in features and shape, as well as hue (to say nothing of morals); and happening to reside in the neighbourhood of the late Duke of St. Albans at the time of his marriage, the village barber, who had been sent for to shave him, told us, that the ducal feet, which he had chanced to see in slippers, were as dark-skinned as the face. We must be excused for relating this circumstance, in consideration of our zeal for the better part of poor Nelly's fame.

There was a singular retrospective fitness in the marriage of the Duke of St. Albans with Harriet Mellon. Even the aristocracy must have beheld it

with something of a saturnine amusement. The public unequivocally enjoyed it. Moralists were perplexed; especially those of the two extremes,—the "outrageously virtuous," who gladly thought the worst of it, and the most liberal speculators upon the ordinations of Providence; who (though coming to a conclusion for the best) are struck with wonder to see one system of morals proclaimed from the high places, and another acted upon, and associated with flourishing perpetuities. Charles the Second, whose Restoration is still thanked for in the churches, and who was the most undisguised libertine that ever sat on the British throne, has left hundreds of illegitimate descendants (thousands rather), the chiefs of whose families are still flourishing in the highest rank, and carrying forward the united dignities of a zeal for church and state, and an unlawful origin. The spectacle, it must be owned, is puzzling. But seen with an eye of charity (the only final reconciler), there is "a preferment in it," better than what is supposed to include, but which it will be easier to investigate some hundreds of years hence, when loyalty and piety shall have ceased to be embarrassed with stumbling-blocks, which they at once bow down to and are bound to be shocked at.

In speaking as we do, however, of the Duke's marriage, we do not at all assume that Harriet Mellon and Nell Gwynn had led the same kind of life. This, we are aware, is the general assumption, or something like it; but the Duchess was intro-

duced at the late court, where, in spite of certain retrospective appearances to the contrary, the demands on conventional propriety were undertook to be in no lax keeping in the hands of the present Queen-dowager: — and Mr. Coutts was very old when he died—upwards of ninety, we believe—and had not been married many years. Who is to say that his residence with the lady, under any circumstances, was not of as innocent a nature as the marriage? Who knows anything to the contrary? and who, in default of knowing it, has a right to assert it? A case was probably made out for the introduction at court, which we are bound, on the lady's word, to take for granted. We daily take hundreds of more unlikely things for granted on similar accounts, especially in high life. Half the west-end of the town would be a mere chaos and tempest from morn to night, if words, and even deeds, had not the handsomest constructions put upon them. Besides, marriages have taken place between ladies and their elders in numerous well-authenticated instances, where the gentleman sought nothing but a nurse or a pleasant friend, and was desirous of gifting her with his wealth to show his gratitude;—and a very reasonable gratitude, too, considering how precious the moments of life are,—provided no just expectations suffer for it, on the part of others. It has been hinted, that the Duchess, when young, was fond of money, and that when she was an actress at sea-ports, she did

not scruple to bustle about among the officers, in behalf of the tickets for her benefit-nights. But she had been left with a mother to support; and even if she had gone somewhat far for that purpose, no respecter of the filial virtues would be quick to condemn her. The consideration of a mother to support is itself a delicacy, which may reasonably set aside fifty others. Perhaps this was one of the very things that the old banker liked her for. He may have been so disgusted with the doubtful virtues and real shabbiness of many rich people, that the sight of one hearty nature might have been a priceless refreshment to him; and when he found it combined with a face to match, and a pleasant conversation, he might, for aught we know, have realized for the first time a dream of his youth. To be sure, it is alleged against him, that his first wife had been a maid-servant. That does not look, certainly, as if he had been accustomed to seek for a partner in the circles of fashion; but then the circumstance, as far as it goes, tells against the experience he had had of them; and it is not impossible even for a maid-servant to be a gentlewoman at heart. Be this as it may (for we know nothing whatsoever of him or his connexions), the will of the Duchess seems to show, that he was in one striking respect worthy of her regard, and she of his; for she has left the bulk of his property to his favourite relation, and in so doing, most likely acted up to a principle which he had justly

reckoned upon. It is true, she has thus given riches to one that does not seem to have needed them, and who will probably be not a whit the happier for the superabundance; but such considerations are not to be expected of people who live in what is called the world. The Duke, at the same time, has not been forgotten, nor poorly treated: the remains of the Duchess have been gathered into the family vault; and she has left the reputation of a woman not contemptuous of her origin, nay, desirous to encourage her former profession, and charitable to the poor. We thus infer that her conduct was held reasonable and honourable by all parties.

The Duchess of St. Albans had a more refined look in her younger days, at least in her favourite characters, than was observable in her countenance latterly. There was never any genius in her acting, nor much sustainment of character in any respect. She seemed never to have taken to the boards with thorough good will. Yet there was archness and agreeableness,—a good deal that looked as if it could be pleasant off the stage. She had black hair, fine eyes, a good-humoured mouth, and an expression upon the whole of sensual but not unamiable intelligence. This she retained in after life, together with the fine eyes and the look of good-humour; but the unlimited power of self-indulgence had not helped to refine it. This, however, was a deterioration which many a high-born

Duchess has shared with her. We used to see her buying flowers at the nursery-grounds, and riding out in her chaise and four, or barouche, often with the Duke. Shortly before her death, we repeatedly met her by herself, but always in the chaise and four, with postillions in the ducal livery. She seemed to say, but more innocently than the personage in the play, "I am Duchess of Malfy still." We used to think that with this fondness for air and exercise, and her natural good-humour, she would attain to long life; but there was more air than exercise, and more luxury than either; and poor Duchess Harriet was too rich, and had too many good things, to continue to enjoy any. Had she remained Harriet Mellon, and disposed of benefit-tickets as of old, she would probably have been alive and merry still. However, she had a fine wondering time of it,—a romance of real life; and no harm's done, not even to the peerage!

The first person among the gentry who took a wife from the stage, was Martin Folkes the antiquary, a man of fortune, who about the year 1713 married LUCRETIA BRADSHAW, a representative of the sprightly heroines of Farquhar and Vanbrugh. The author of the 'History of the English Stage,' quoted in the work that we are about to refer to, calls her "one of the greatest and most promising *genii* of her time," and says that Mr. Folkes made her his wife "for her exemplary and prudent conduct." He adds, that "it was a rule with her, in her profession,

to make herself mistress of her art, and leave the figure and action to nature." What he means by this is not clear. Probably for "art" we should read "part;" which would imply, that the fair Lucretia got her dialogue well by rote, and then gave herself up, without further study, to the impulses of the character; which in such lively ones as those of *Corinna* in the 'Confederacy,' and *Angelica* in the 'Constant Couple,' probably disposed the gallant virtuoso to inquire whether she could be as prudent as she was agreeable. From her performance of characters of this description, Mr. Nichols hastily infers that she must have been a handsome woman *at least*, had a good figure, and probably second-rate theatrical talent."* Be this as it may, the poor lady ultimately lost her reason. We are not told anything of her origin or connexions.

The man who first imitated this singular example, was a personage celebrated for his gallantry in all senses of the word — the famous Lord Peterborough, the hero of the war of the succession in Spain, and friend of Pope and Swift. The date of the marriage is not known, for it was long kept secret; but in the year before his lordship died (1735) he publicly acknowledged as his countess the celebrated ANASTASIA ROBINSON, the singer. She had appeared upon the stage, but was chiefly

* Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century, vol. ii. p. 588.

known in the concert-room. Her father was a portrait-painter of good family, who had studied in Italy, was master of the Italian language, and very fond of music; but losing his sight, the daughter, much against her inclination in other respects, turned her own passion for music, which he had cultivated, into a means of living for the family. Dr. Burney, however, who has related the story at large after his gossiping fashion, shall give the account in his own words. The subject renders it interesting:—

"Mrs. Anastasia Robinson," he tells us, "was of a middling stature, not handsome, but of a pleasing modest countenance, with large blue eyes. Her deportment was easy, unaffected, and graceful. Her manner and address very engaging, and her behaviour, on all occasions, that of a gentlewoman with perfect propriety. She was not only liked by all her acquaintance, but loved and caressed by persons of the highest rank, with whom she appeared always equal, without assuming. Her father's house in Golden-square was frequented by all the men of genius and refined taste of the times. Among the number of persons of distinction who frequented Mr. Robinson's house, and seemed to distinguish his daughter in a particular manner, were the Earl of Peterborough and General H——. The latter had shown a long attachment to her, and his attentions were so remarkable that they seemed more than the effects of common politeness; and as he was a very agreeable man and in good circumstances, he was favourably received, not doubting but that his intentions were honourable. A declaration of a very contrary nature was treated with the contempt it deserved, though Mrs. A. Robinson was very much prepossessed in his favour.

"Soon after this, Lord P—— endeavoured to convince her

of his partial regard for her; but, agreeable and artful as he was, she remained very much upon her guard, which rather increased than diminished his admiration and passion for her. Yet still his pride struggled with his inclination; for all this time she was engaged to sing in public, a circumstance very grievous to her; but urged by the best of motives, she submitted to it in order to assist her parents, whose fortune was much reduced by Mr. Robinson's loss of sight, which deprived him of the benefit of his profession as a painter.

"At length Lord P—— made his declaration on honourable terms; he found it would be vain to make proposals on any other, and as he omitted no circumstance that could engage her esteem and gratitude, she accepted them, as she was sincerely attached to him. He earnestly requested her keeping it a secret till it was a more convenient time for him to make it known, to which she readily consented, having a perfect confidence in his honour. Among the persons of distinction that professed a friendship for Mrs. A. Robinson were the Earl and Countess of Oxford, daughter-in-law to the Lord Treasurer Oxford, who not only bore every public testimony of affection and esteem for Mrs. A. Robinson, but Lady Oxford attended her when she was privately married to the Earl of P——, and Lady P—— ever acknowledged her obligations with the warmest gratitude; and after Lady Oxford's death, she was particularly distinguished by the Duchess of Portland, Lady Oxford's daughter, and was always mentioned by her with the greatest kindness, for the many friendly offices she used to do her in her childhood, when in Lady Oxford's family, which made a lasting impression on the Duchess of Portland's noble and generous heart.

* * * * *

"After the death of Mr. Robinson, Lord P—— took a house near Fulham, in the neighbourhood of his own villa at Parson's Green, where he settled Mrs. Robinson and her mother. They never lived under the same roof, till the earl

being seized with a violent fit of illness, solicited her to attend him at Mount Bevis, near Southampton, which she refused with firmness, but upon condition that, though still denied to take his name, she might be permitted to wear her wedding-ring; to which, finding her inexorable, he at length consented.

"His haughty spirit was still reluctant to the making a declaration that would have done justice to so worthy a character as the person to whom he was now united, and indeed, his uncontrollable temper, and high opinion of his own actions, made him a very awful husband, ill-suited to Lady's P.'s good sense, amiable temper, and delicate sentiments. She was a Roman Catholic, but never gave offence to those of a contrary opinion, though very strict in what she thought her duty. Her excellent principles and fortitude of mind supported her through many severe trials in her conjugal state. But at last he prevailed upon himself to do her justice, instigated, it is supposed, by his bad state of health, which obliged him to seek another climate; and she absolutely refused to go with him unless he declared his marriage. Her attendance upon him in his illness nearly cost her her life.

"He appointed a day for all his nearest relations to meet him at an apartment, over the gateway of St. James's Palace, belonging to Mr. Pointz, who was married to Lord Peterborough's niece, and at that time preceptor to Prince William, afterwards Duke of Cumberland. Lord P—— also appointed Lady P—— to be there at the same time. When they were all assembled, he began a most eloquent oration, enumerating all the virtues and perfections of Mrs. A. Robinson, and the rectitude of her conduct during his long acquaintance with her, for which he acknowledged his great obligations and sincere attachment, declaring he was determined to do her that justice which he ought to have done long ago, which was presenting her to all his family as his wife. He spoke this harangue with so much energy, and in parts so pathetically, that Lady P——

not being apprised of his intentions, was so affected that she fainted away in the midst of the company.

"After Lord P.'s death she lived a very retired life, chiefly at Mount Bevis, and was seldom prevailed on to leave that habitation, but by the Duchess of Portland, who was always happy to have her company at Bulstrode, when she could obtain it, and often visited her at her own house.

"Among Lord P.'s papers she found his memoirs, written by himself, in which he declared he had been guilty of such actions as would have reflected very much upon his character. For which reason she burnt them. This, however, contributed to complete the excellency of her principles, though it did not fail giving offence to the curious inquirers after anecdotes of so remarkable a character as that of the Earl of Peterborough.*"

Lord Peterborough was an extraordinary person in every respect, and very likely he perplexed not a little the faculties of poor Anastasia Robinson. But the perplexity was not all of his own creation. She must have known his reputation as a general lover before she married him; and though the vivacity of his temperament seems to have kept him young in a manner to the last, yet the disproportion of their ages was great enough to warrant a doubt of the disinterestedness of her acquiescence. Not that her heart might have been altogether unimpressed, especially by a sort of gratitude, for she appears to have been a really kind and gentle creature; and if Marmontel was young enough at fifty-six to win the affections of a young wife, and make her the grateful mother of a family, the lively conqueror of Spain,

* Burney's "History of Music." Vol. iv.

the most active man of his time, who had "seen more princes and postillions than any man in Europe," might have appeared no such frightful senior in the eyes of the flattered singer at fifty-seven; for it was at that age he appears to have first known her. Even at seventy-nine, when he died, the fire of his nature appeared so inexhaustible, that Pope exclaimed in astonishment, "This man can neither live nor die like any one else."* But then he was a conqueror, and an earl withal, and a rich man, and had a riband and star at his breast. *Chi sa?* as the good-natured Italians say, when a gossiping question is to be determined—Who knows? And so we take leave of the gallant Earl of Peterborough and the fair Anastasia.†

* See his interesting account of Peterborough's latter moments in one of his *Letters*.

† In the "Letters and Works of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu," lately edited by her great-grandson, Lord Wharncliffe, is the following specimen of the tattle of the day from the sprightly pen of her ladyship, who for obvious reasons is too much given to scandal, and willing to find fault. "Would any one believe that Lady Holdernesse is a beauty and in love? and that Mrs. Robinson is at the same time a prude and a kept mistress? and these things in spite of nature and fortune. The first of these ladies is tenderly attached to the polite Mr. M * * *, and sunk in all the joys of happy love, notwithstanding she wants the use of her two hands by a rheumatism, and he has an arm that he cannot move. I wish I could tell you the particulars of this amour, which seems to me as curious as that between two oysters, and as well worth the serious attention of the naturalist. The second heroine has engaged half the town

The ladies of quality now commence their example. On the 8th of January 1739, the Lady Henrietta Herbert, widow of Lord Edward Herbert, second son of the Marquis of Powis, and daughter of James, first Earl of Waldegrave, was married to JOHN BEARD, the singer. We have a pleasure in stating the circumstance as formally as possible, for three reasons; first, because the marriage was a happy one; second, *because all mention of it is omitted in the Peerages;* and third, because Lord Wharncliffe, in his edition of the "Letters and Works of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu," above mentioned, designated Beard, we know not

in arms, from the nicety of her virtue, which was not able to bear the too near approach of Senesino in the opera, and her condescension in accepting of Lord Peterborough for a champion; who has signalised both his love and courage upon this occasion in as many instances as ever Don Quixote did for Dulcinea. Poor Senesino, like a vanquished giant, was forced to confess upon his knees, that Anastasia was a nonpareil of virtue and beauty. Lord Stanhope, as a dwarf to the said giant, joked on his side, and was challenged for his pains. Lord Delawar was Lord Peterborough's second; my lady miscarried; the whole town divided into parties on this important point. Innumerable have been the disorders between the two sexes on so great an account, besides half the House of Peers being put under an arrest. By the providence of Heaven, and the wise cares of his Majesty, no bloodshed ensued. However, things are now tolerably accommodated; and the fair lady rides through the town in triumph in the shining berlin of her hero, not to reckon the more solid advantage of 100*l.* a month, which 't is said he allowsher."

on what authority, as "a man of very indifferent character." Now it has ever been acknowledged by the common feelings of society, that the reputation of an honest man is the property of all who resemble him; and therefore his lordship, as one of them, was bound either to own himself mistaken in this matter, or inform us upon what ground he differed with the received opinion. We never met with a mention of Beard, in which his character was spoken of at all, without its being accompanied with high approbation, sometimes enthusiastic. We are not sure that, in the extracts we are about to make, we have not even missed the most glowing of the instances. The ensuing passage is from the *Gentleman's Magazine*:—

"Feb. 5th, 1791.—In his 75th year, at Hampton, where he has resided since his retirement from the stage, John Beard, Esq., formerly one of the proprietors and acting-manager of Covent Garden Theatre, and long a very eminent and popular singer, till the loss of his hearing disqualified him from performing. His first marriage is thus recorded on a handsome pyramidal monument in Pancras churchyard.

"'Sacred to the remains of Lady Henrietta Beard, only daughter of James Earl of Waldegrave. In the year 1734 she was married to Lord Edward Herbert, second son to the Marquis of Powis; by whom she had issue one daughter, Barbara, now Countess of Powis. On the 8th of January 1738-9, she became the wife of Mr. John Beard, who during a happy union of 14 years, tenderly loved her person, and admired her virtues; who sincerely feels and laments her loss; and must for ever revere her memory; to which he consecrates this monument.

"'Ob. XXXI. Maii, MDCCLIII, æt. XXXVI.

"'Requiescat in pace.'

"By this lady's death, a jointure of 600*l.* a year devolved to Earl Powis. He married, secondly, a daughter of Mr. Rich, patentee of Covent Garden Theatre, whose sister married, 1. Mr. Morris, 2. Mr. Horsley, brother to the Bishop of St. David's. By the death of his father-in-law Mr. Rich, Mr. B. found himself in affluent circumstances, and his agreeable talents secured to him a circle of friends in his retirement. He has left legacies to the amount of 3,000*l.*; which, considering his expenses in his house at Hampton, and his hospitable manner of living, with the settlement on his widow, is almost the whole of his fortune; 100*l.* to the fund for decayed performers; and to Mr. Hull, his intimate friend and acquaintance, 50*l.* to buy a ring in memory of him.—The following epitaph, probably by Mr. Hull,* has been sent by a correspondent:—

"'Satire be dumb! nor dream the scenic art,
Must spoil the morals, and corrupt the heart.
Here lies JOHN BEARD.
——— Confess with pensive pause
His modesty was great as our applause.
Whence had that voice such magic to control?
'T was but the echo of a well-tun'd soul:
Through life his morals and his music ran
In symphony, and spoke the virtuous man.
Go, gentle harmonist! our hopes approve,
To meet and hear thy sacred songs above;
When taught by thee, the stage of life well trod,
We rise to raptures round the throne of God.'"

Dr. Burney, speaking of Beard as a rival singer, says—

* It appears, from a subsequent passage, to have been written by Dr. Cousens, Rector of St. Gregory, Old Fish-street.

"Lowe had sometimes a subordinate part given him; but with the finest tenor voice I ever heard in my life, for want of diligence and cultivation, he never could be safely trusted with anything better than a ballad, which he constantly learned by the ear; whereas Mr. Beard with an inferior voice, constantly possessed the favour of the public, *by his superior conduct*, knowledge of music, and intelligence as an actor."*

And in the *General Biographical Dictionary* is this cordial eulogy of him in *all* characters:—

"He was long the deserved favourite of the public; and whoever remembers the variety of his abilities, as actor and singer, in oratorios and operas, both serious and comic, will testify to his having stood unrivalled in fame and excellence. This praise, however, great as it was, fell short of what his private merits acquired. He had one of the sincerest hearts joined to the most polished manners; he was a most delightful companion, whether as host or guest. His time, his pen, and purse were devoted to the alleviation of every distress that fell within the compass of his power, and through life he fulfilled the relative duties of a son, brother, guardian, friend, and husband, with the most exemplary truth and tenderness."

"We hope here be proofs."

In short, we fear his lordship must have taken a certain moral criticism for granted, with which his great-grandmother favoured one of her correspondents;—a perilous assumption at any time where Lady Mary is concerned, and the extremely vulgar style of which, in the present instance, one should think, might have warned off the better taste of the noble editor. The reader is here presented with

* "History of Music," vol. iv. p. 667.

it, as a *just-bearable* specimen of the way in which ladies of quality could write to one another in those days.

"Lady Townshend has entertained the Bath with a variety of lively scenes; and Lady Harriet Herbert furnished the tea-tables here with fresh tattle for this last fortnight. I was one of the first informed of her adventure by Lady Gage, who was told that morning by a priest, that she had desired him to marry her the next day to Beard, who sings in the farce at Drury Lane. He refused her that good office, and immediately told Lady Gage, who (having been unfortunate in her friends) was frighted in this affair and asked my advice. I told her honestly, that since the lady was capable of such amours, I did not doubt if this was broke off she would bestow her person and fortune on some hackney coachman or chairman; and that I really saw no method of saving her from ruin, and her family from dishonour, but by poisoning her, and offered to be at the expense of the arsenic, and even to administer it with my own hands if she would invite her to drink tea with her that evening. But on her not approving of that method, she sent to Lady Montacute, Mrs. Dunch, and all the relations within the reach of messengers. They carried Lady Harriet to Twickenham; though I told them it was a bad air for girls. She is since returned to London, and some people believe her married; others that he is too much intimidated by Mr. Waldegrave's threat to dare to go through the ceremony; but the secret is now public, and in what manner it will conclude I know not. Her relations have certainly no reason to be amazed at her constitution, but are violently surprised at the mixture of devotion that forces her to have recourse to the Church in her necessities; which has not been the road taken by the matrons of the family. Such examples are very detrimental to our whole sex; and are apt to influence the others into a belief that we are unfit to manage either liberty or money. These melancholy

reflections make me incapable of a lively conclusion to my letter; you must accept of a very sincere one in the assurance

"That I am, dear madam,

"Inviolably yours," &c.

We now come to one who was first a mistress, though subsequently a wife—LAVINIA FENTON, otherwise called Mrs. Beswick (Lavinia Fenton sounds like a stage-name). This actress was married in 1751 to Charles, third Duke of Bolton, on the decease of his Duchess, with whom he is said never to have cohabited. The Duke had had three children (all sons) by his mistress previously, but he had none when she became his wife; so that on his death in 1754, the title went to his brother.* He was then sixty-nine. He is described in his latter days by Horace Walpole, as an old beau, fair complexioned, and in a white wig, gallanting the ladies about in public. The Duchess was the original Polly in the Beggars' Opera, and so much the rage in that character, that it was probably thought a feat in the gallant Duke to carry her off the stage. Her good qualities appear to have fixed a passion, created perhaps by vanity. It is said, that on his once threatening to leave her, she knelt and sang, 'Oh ponder well' in a style so tender, that he had not the heart to do it. She survived her husband till 1760, after behaving, according to Walpole, not so well in the character

* In Sir Egerton Brydges's edition of Collins' "Peerage," vol. ii. p. 386, published in the year 1812, is a list of the Duke's family by Mrs. Beswick.

of widow as of wife. "The famous Polly, Duchess of Bolton," says he, in one of his letters, "is dead, having, after a life of merit, relapsed into her *Pollyhood*. Two years ago, ill at Tonbridge, she pitched upon an Irish surgeon. When she was dying, this fellow sent for a lawyer to make her will; but the man, finding who was to be her heir instead of her children, refused to draw it. The Court of Chancery did furnish one other, not quite so scrupulous, and her three sons have but a thousand pounds a piece; the surgeon about nine thousand."* This may be true, or it may be totally false. There is no trusting to these pieces of gossip; nor is any conclusion to be drawn from one part of a story, particularly a family one, till we know the other. Preposterous wills of all sorts are frequent; but "a life of merit," especially of kindly merit, is seldom closed by contradiction; and supposing the statement to be true, the Duchess may have had other reasons for leaving no more to her children. They were the Duke's as well as hers, and may have been already provided for; or she might have felt certain they would be so.

In addition to the words "a life of merit," as affecting the Duchess of Bolton, a strong, though negative testimony, both to the good behaviour of Beard towards his wife, and of Lavinia Fenton towards the Duke, in one whose memory was so sensitive on the point, is observable in the very

* "Letters to Sir Horace Mann." Vol. iii. p. 403.

silence maintained respecting them by Horace Walpole in a list of names we shall give presently, connected with those of whom we are going to speak. The first of these is MARY WOFFINGTON, sister of the celebrated Margaret; a name by which Horace's own pride was injured.

"I have been unfortunate in my own family," says he, in another letter to the friend above mentioned; "my nephew, Captain Cholmondeley, has married a player's sister; and I fear Lord Malpas (his brother) is on the brink of marriage with another girl of no fortune. Here is a ruined family! their father totally undone, and all he has seized for debt." * Lavinia Fenton and Mary Woffington appear to have been married the same year. Mary was a player herself as well as a "player's sister;" at least, she is mentioned by a contemporary as having made her *debut*.† Like her sister, she was handsome. The annoyance of her marriage to the husband's connexions must have been aggravated by Margaret's character, who, notwithstanding her talents and good qualities, had little delicacy. She was accustomed to preside at the Beef-steak Club in man's clothes; and had been Garrick's mistress. To crown all, her father had kept a huckster's shop. *Captain* Cholmondeley's fortunes, however, were mended after a fashion not

* "Letters to Sir Horace Mann." Vol. ii. p. 263.

† "Apology for the Life of George Anne Bellamy." Vol. i. p. 44.

uncommon to "ruined" young officers of noble families, by his "preferring an ecclesiastical to a military life." He obtained two church livings; and to these contrived to add the lay office of Auditor-General of the Revenues of America.* The Captain had a numerous progeny by his wife, and we hear no more of her. But there appears to have been much amiableness in his offspring, from whichever party derived, perhaps from both. One of the daughters was the Miss Cholmondeley, who was killed by the overturning of the Princess Charlotte's carriage in 1806; and another was Lady Bellingham, wife of Sir William, the late Baronet, who has left their sisterly attachment on record. There is no saying how much good and happiness a real bit of love may have put into the family blood, from whatever source. Horace Walpole, with his fastidious celibacy (or whatever epithet might apply to it), left no children, merry or sad.

But we now come to the first unhappy marriage of this sort, known to have existed, and against which Horace had reason to lift up his voice. This was the union of Lady Elizabeth Bertie, daughter of the Earl of Abingdon, with Gallini the dancer, afterwards "Sir John," as he called himself; though it does not appear that his poor papal title of "Knight of the Golden Spur" (however fit for his heel) was ever warranted to assume the English form of address.

* Collins's "Peerage," as above. Vol. iv. p. 34.

Gallini, though a good dancer, or teacher of dancing, and a prosperous lessee of the Hanover-square Rooms, was nothing more. He was honest in his money dealings, and this appears to be the amount of his virtue. He was a shrewd man of the world, parsimonious, with nothing but a leg to go upon in matters of love; and that never turns out to be sufficient "in the long run." The lady and he lived asunder many years, and died asunder; he in 1805, aged seventy-one, and she in 1804 at eighty; so that, besides other unsuitableness, she was eight years his senior. Gallini had been her dancing-master. Many ridiculous stories were in circulation respecting the honours which he counted upon in consequence of his marriage with a noble family. He imagined it would confer on him the title of lord. When the marriage became the subject of conversation, Dr. Burney overheard in the gangway of the Opera pit the following conversation:—A lady said to another, "It is reported that one of the dancers is married to a woman of quality." Gallini, who happened to be in the passage, said, "Lustrissima, son io," (I am the man, my lady.)—"And who are you?" demanded the lady.—"Excellenza, mi chiamo Signor Gallini, *esquoire*."* (Your excellency, my name is Signor Gallini, *esquoire*.)

This was a bad business. Not such, though Horace Walpole was in despair about it, appears to have been the marriage of WILLIAM O'BRIEN,

* "General Biographical Dictionary." Vol. xiv. p. 427.

omedian (styled in the Peerages, William O'Brien, Esq. of Stinsford, Dorsetshire) with Lady Susan Strangeways (Fox), daughter of the Earl of Ilchester, in the year 1773. The outset of the affair, however, looked ill. The following is Walpole's account of it:—

"You will have heard of the sad misfortune that has happened to Lord Ilchester, by his daughter's marriage with O'Brien the actor. But perhaps you do not know the circumstances, and how much his grief must be aggravated by reflection on his own credulity and negligence. The affair has been in train for eighteen months. The swain had learned to counterfeit Lady Sarah Bunbury's hand so well, that in the country Lord Ilchester has himself delivered several of O'Brien's letters to Lady Susan; but it was not till about a week before the catastrophe that the family was apprised of the intrigue. Lord Cathcart went to Miss Reade's the paintress. She said softly to him: 'My lord, there is a couple in the next room, that I am sure ought not to be together; I wish your lordship would look in.' He did, shut the door again, and went and informed Lord Ilchester. Lady Susan was examined, flung herself at her father's feet, confessed all, vowed to break off—but—what a but!—desired to see the loved object, and take a last leave. You will be amazed—even this was granted. The parting scene happened the beginning of the week. On Friday she came of age, and on Saturday morning—instead of being under lock and key in the country—walked down stairs, took her footman, said she was going to breakfast with Lady Sarah; but would call at Miss Reade's; in the street, pretended to recollect a particular cap in which she was to be drawn, sent the footman back for it, whipped into a hackney-chair, was married at Covent Garden Church, and set out for Mr. O'Brien's villa at Dunstable. My Lady—my Lady Hertford! what say *you*

to permitting young ladies to act plays, and go to painters by themselves?

"Poor Lord Ilchester is almost distracted; indeed it is the completion of disgrace—even a footman were preferable; the publicity of the hero's profession perpetuates the mortification. *Il ne sera pas milord tout comme un autre.* I could not have believed that Lady Susan would have stooped so low. She may, however, still keep good company, and say, '*nos numeri sumus.*' Lady Mary Duncan, Lady Caroline Adair, Lady Betty Gallini —the shopkeepers of next age will be mighty well born." *

The Lady Mary Duncan, whose surname is thus contemptuously mentioned, was daughter of the Earl of Thanet, and married a *physician.* The husband of Lady Caroline Adair, a daughter of the Earl of Albemarle, was a *surgeon.*† In a book, printed at Harrisburgh, in America, in the year 1811, and entitled *Memoirs of a Life chiefly passed in Pennsylvania within the last Sixty Years*, &c., is an account of some inmates of a lodging-house at Philadelphia, among whom were Lady Susan O'Brien and her husband:—

"Another," says the writer, "was Lady Susan O'Brien, not

* "Letters to the Earl of Hertford," &c. p. 106.

† The same, to whom an article is devoted in the *Lounger's Common-Place Book.* For some curious accounts of Lady Mary Duncan's eccentricities and generosity, see Madame d'Arblay's *Memoirs of Dr. Burney.* The best of the joke, as regards her marriage, was, that the connexions of her husband the physician were not only as respectable as himself, but produced the famous naval warrior; on occasion of whose victory over the Dutch, Lady Mary exclaimed, "Well, my honours, you see, are to come, after all, from the Duncans."

more distinguished by her title, than by her husband who accompanied her, and had figured as a comedian on the London stage, in the time of Garrick, Mossop, and Barry. Although Churchill charges him with being an imitator of Woodward, he yet admits him to be a man of parts; and he has been said to have surpassed all his cotemporaries in the character of the fine gentleman; in his easy manner of treading the stage; and particularly of drawing his sword, to which action he communicated a swiftness and a grace which Garrick imitated but could not equal. O'Brien is presented to my recollection as a man of the middle height, with a symmetrical form, rather light than athletic. Employed by the father to instruct Lady Susan in elocution, he taught her, it seems, that it was no sin to love; for she became his wife, and, as I have seen it mentioned in the 'Theatrical Mirror,' obtained for him, through the interest of her family, a post in America. But what this post was, or where it located him, I never heard."*

It thus appears that Lady Susan had at least love enough for her husband to accompany him to the other side of the globe; nor from Churchill's account of O'Brien would it seem that he was unworthy of it:—

"Shadows behind of Foote and Woodward came;
Wilkinson this, O'Brien was that name:
Strange to relate, but wonderfully true,
That even shadows have their shadows too.
With not a single comic power endued,
The first a mere mere mimic's mimic stood;
The last, *by nature form'd to please*, who shows
In Jonson's Stephen, which way *genius* grows,

* "Memoirs of a Life," &c. p. 56.

Self quite put off, affects, with too much art,
To put on Woodward in each mingled part;
Adopts his shrug, his wink, his stare; nay, more,
His voice, and croaks; for Woodward croak'd before.
When a dull copier simple grace neglects,
And rests his imitation in defects,
We readily forgive; but such vile arts
Are double guilt in men of real parts."

ROSCIAD.

O'Brien is here not only styled a man of parts, but is said to have shown "genius," and to have been "by nature formed to please;" which seems to imply that he was both well looking and agreeable. And his very propensity, under these circumstances, to imitate another rather than trust to his own powers, argues at least no superabundance of that metal upon which the faces of Irishmen have been complimented.

The union which, of all those of professional origin, seemed to promise most for felicity, that of ELIZABETH LINLEY with the subsequently famous Sheridan, is understood to have had but an ill result. The lady, daughter of Linley the composer, was beautiful, accomplished, and a fine singer; the gentleman, a wit, a man of courage, and with, apparently, a bright and prosperous life before him. He had fought for her with a rival, under circumstances of romantic valour; and no one appeared every way so fit to carry off the warbling beauty, since he could alike protect her with the sword, and write songs fit for her to warble. But

Sheridan, with all his talents, was not provident enough to save a wife from ordinary disquietudes, nor (for aught that has appeared) had he steadiness of heart enough to make her happy in spite of them; and Miss Linley, besides the vanity perhaps natural to a flattered beauty, and therefore a craving for admiration, wanted economy herself, and had a double portion of sensibility. It is to be doubted, whether the author of the *Rivals* and the *School for Scandal* possessed the sentiment of love in any proportion to the animal passion of it. An harmonious nature probably left no sympathy out of the composition of his wife. The result, chiefly as it affected their fortunes, has been intimated by Madame d'Arblay in very solemn, head-shaking style. The less bounded sympathy of a poet (Thomas Moore) has, if we are not mistaken, delicately touched upon the remainder of the story somewhere; but we cannot find the passage, and it is not material to the purpose before us.

It was looked upon, no doubt, as a far less daring thing to take a wife from the concert room than the theatre, especially as Miss Linley had not long been in it, and the precedent of Anastasia Robinson had been redeemed by the grace and propriety of her manners. But a female was now to appear on the stage, and in comedy too, who by her singular fitness for personating the character of a gentlewoman, was justly accorded the rank of one by common consent;—so much so, that her marriage into high life

seems to have taken off the worst part of the opprobrium from all similar unions in future. We allude to ELIZABETH FARREN, who, in the year 1797, upon the death of his first Countess, was married to Edward, Earl of Derby, father of the present Earl. His lordship was neither young nor handsome; the lady was prudent; quietly transferred her elegant manners from the stage to the drawing-room, and the public heard no more of her.

This sensible example on the part of the lady was followed by those whom it had probably assisted towards the like exaltation. In 1807, LOUISA BRUNTON was married to the late Earl Craven, by whom she was mother to the present; and like Miss Farren she disappeared into private life. We recollect her as being what is called a fine woman, and one that had lady-like manners, carried to a pitch of fashionable indifference. She would sometimes, for instance, twist about a leaf, or bit of thread, between her lips while speaking, by way of evincing her naturalness, or *nonchalance*. She was sister of the respectable actor of that name, and aunt of Mrs. Yates, the admirable performer of *Victorine*.

In the same year, Miss SEARLE (we know not her Christian name, which is a pity, considering that she was one of the delights of our boyish eyes) became the wife of Robert Heathcote, Esq., brother of Sir Gilbert; and vanished like her predecessors. She was a dancer, but of great elegance, with a rare look of lady-like self-possession, which she con-

trived to preserve without injuring a certain air of enjoyment fitting for the dance. It was this union that captivated us.

"The Beggars' Opera" now put a coronet on the brows of another Polly:—at least, this character, we believe, was the one which chiefly brought forward the gentle attractions of MARY CATHERINE BOLTON, called also *Polly* Bolton, who, in 1813, became the wife of Lord Thurlow, nephew of the first Lord Thurlow the judge, and what is more, a true poet, notwithstanding the fantastical things he mixed up with his poetry. There are passages in them of the right inspired sort—remote in the fancy, yet close to feeling,—and worthy to stand in the first rank of modern genius. We fear he made but too poetical a consort, richer in the article of mind than money; but if he had a poet's kindness, and her ladyship heart enough to understand him (as her look promised), she may still have been happy. We know nothing further of his lordship or his marriage, except that the present lord is the result.

We have no records before us to show when Mr. Beecher, a gentleman of fortune, married the celebrated tragic actress, Miss O'NEIL; nor when Mr. Bradshaw, another, married Miss TREE, one of the truest of the representatives of Shakspeare's gentler heroines, albeit there was something a little fastidious in her countenance. The latest of these unions, Mrs. Coutts's marriage to the Duke of St. Albans,

came the first under our notice; and therefore we shall now conclude with some general remarks on the spirit of this custom of wedding with the stage, and the light in which it ought to be regarded.

And this simply concentrates itself, we conceive, into one point; which is, that the theatrical world no more renders a person unworthy of the highest and happiest fortune, if the individual has been unspoilt by it, *than the world of fashion does.* See what has transpired in the course of this article, respecting people of fashion, and let any one ask himself whether it would be fairer to say, "Don't take a wife or husband from the stage," than "Don't take one from the world of fashion." Mrs. Bradshaw was of unexceptionable character; Lady Peterborough was unexceptionable; Beard was unexceptionable; so was O'Brien, for aught we know to the contrary; so was Miss Linley, Miss Farren, Miss Brunton, Miss Searle, Miss Bolton, Miss O'Neil, Miss Tree. Really the stage, instead of a sorry figure on these occasions, presents, upon the whole, an excellent one; and considering its comparative smallness, and inferior education, may put its fashionable friend on the defensive!

We have seen what sort of a character for "moral restraint" Lord Peterborough had, who, with all his valour, was so frightened at the idea of introducing an honest gentlewoman into the great world! and yet this was a world which would have made him laugh in your teeth, if you had given it credit

for any one virtue! But so enormous was the honour to be bestowed on her by giving her his name, that he found it hardly endurable to think of. He postponed it till he stood between heaven and earth, dying, and when it just became possible to see such distinctions in their true light; an Earl being, after all, "a little lower than the angels!" One of Lord Peterborough's grand-aunts was the Duchess of Norfolk who caused so much scandal in the year 1700, and who after her divorce married Sir John Germain; a man so ignorant, that it was a joke against him in the fashionable world to pretend that he left a legacy to Sir Matthew Decker, as believing him to be the author of St. Matthew's Gospel!

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu is scandalized at the marriage of Lady Henrietta Herbert with Beard; and she contrives that the question shall be begged against the bridegroom by her very descendant. But what sort of a life was Lady Mary's! and how must the noble editor have felt in recording it? What sort of language did she use? and what did she really think of these vivacities of temperament in other people and in *herself*, which she assumes in the case of Lady Henrietta, and only thinks objectionable because legalized with an actor? Here's a chaos of conventional morality! But "Lady Mary," it may be said, was an exception; she was a genius, flighty, and "all that." Well, her father was a man of pleasure; his successor in the Dukedom of Kingston another, or an

imbecile; and her own son, another, eccentric beyond herself. And as to her husband's relatives, the Montagues (with no disparagement to the better part of them), see what is said of them in Pepys, in Grammont, &c. down to the times of "Jemmy Twitcher" and Miss Ray. "Jemmy Twitcher" is not a nickname given on the stage in a farce. It is one of the numerous sallies of the anti-theatrical tongue of fashion. "Jemmy Twitcher" was John Montagu, fourth Earl of Sandwich, and First Lord of the Admiralty, famous for having a mistress who did not love him, and for playing the kettle-drum. Compare him with any given player of kettle-drums in an orchestra, who can get a living by it, and has a mistress that loves him. Which of the two has the right to look down on the other?

We do not wish to be getting scandalous, even retrospectively. Our sole object is to admonish scandal, and vindicate justice. Lady Henrietta Herbert's own family, the Waldegraves, produced excellent people, nor do we mean to blame them for having had natural children among their ancestors; and yet even a conventional moralist, standing up for his principles, is bound to ask, why an honest player was to be despised by them, while they thought it an honour to be descended from the illegitimate offspring of princes and ministers? Lady Henrietta's name came to her from her grandmother Henrietta Churchill, daughter of James the Second by the sister of the famous Duke of Marl-

borough; which great General, by the way, is understood to have owed his first advancement in life to the favours of the Duchess of Cleveland, mistress of James's brother. On whichever side one turns in the great world, one meets with lessons against the stone-throwers among them. The "glass-houses" are innumerable. It is a city of fragility; and the theatres, we must say, teaching the humanities of Shakspeare, cut a solid figure in the perspective. We do not wonder at the "great world," nor blame it, as long as it is considerate to others. Its faults are among the natural consequences of the refinements of civilization; and the glass, it is to be hoped, will consolidate itself somehow or other into a nobler material. But we must proceed with our case.

Poor, flimsy, witty, wise, foolish, aristocratical, old-bachelor Horace Walpole, is shocked at his nephew marrying an actress who brought him good children, and at Lady Susan Fox's running away with William O'Brien, "by nature formed to please." Why, the Foxes themselves, nobly as they have been allied, and higher as their blood has been carried by intellect, originated in a singing-boy (Stephen Fox); and who that loves the open nature of Charles Fox, or the indulgent paternity of his father, or the many admirable qualities of the late Lord Holland, or any other real virtues in this or any family in high life, would willingly rake up whatsoever faults might be found mixed

with them, to the chance of being considered a hypocrite and a fop, if such a man as Horace Walpole would but leave other people's virtues alone, and not take up a *baton sinister* to lay it over the shoulders of the untitled? Horace's own friends and relations, including his father and mother, were tattled of in their day in connexion with all sorts of moral offences, gallantry in particular. Divorces and natural children, and open scandal, were rife among them. It was doubted by some, whether Horace himself was his father's own son! Yet we do not find the prince of gossips crying out against these things with the grief and agitation that afflict him at an honest marriage with the green-room. He makes pastime of them with his correspondents, —mere "fun and drollery." But in an actress! or in a Duchess who has been an actress! *That* he calls relapsing into her "Pollyhood."

Swift, on the other hand, did not wait for Duchesses to have been actresses, in order to think they might rank among the lowest of the sex. He speaks in one of his letters, of having been at a party the night before, where he saw my lady this and that, the "Duchess" of something, and "*other drabs!*" Nay, Horace himself might have said this, when in another humour; but here is one of the preposterous assumptions of the "great world," or rather the very heart of its mystery;—it is to be allowed to rail at itself, as much as it will, and for all sorts of basenesses, while simply to *be* the

great world gives it a virtue above virtue, which no plebeian goodness is to think of approaching.

Since Walpole's time, the spread of education, and the general rise of most ranks in knowledge (for the highest, with sullen folly, seem to think any addition to their stock unnecessary), have rendered it almost as ridiculous to make this sort of lamentation over a marriage with the green-room, as it would be to think of showing anything but respect to one with the learned professions. The Pepyses and Halfords have delivered "the faculty" from the "prohibited degrees;" and few would be surprised nowadays, at hearing that a Lawrence or a Carlisle had married the daughter of a nobleman. Almost as little does any one think of the Lady Derbys and Cravens with a feeling of levity or surprise. The staid conduct and previous elegance of a succession of coronetted actresses has tranquilly displaced the old barriers, which it shook the poor fashionable world to the soul to see touched; and by one of those curious compromises with morality, which always existed in that quarter, and betrayed its want of dignity, the riches and high title of the great banker's widow have strengthened rather than diminished the effect of unequivocal virtue itself, and left the stage in possession of the most unbounded rights of expectation. When an actress of celebrity now marries, the surprise of the public is, that she puts up with a private gentleman. Wealth is power, and power is everything with the gra-

tuitously meritorious. It is not indeed to be despised by any body, inasmuch as it is substantial and effective; and hence the delusion of those who, because they are in possession of the remains of it, fancy they inherit it for ever, undiminished by the encroachments of the power derived from that very knowledge which, after all, is the only basis of their own, and which is sliding from under their proud and careless feet. Some real superiority, was it only in bodily strength or cunning, was the first exaltation of men above their fellows. The advantages derived from it gradually secured to them those of the superiority of knowledge; and a feeling has been increasing of later years, that knowledge and accomplishments, and the moral graces that attend them, now make the only real difference between the pretensions of decent people. "The shopkeepers of the next age," says Horace Walpole, in a sneer which now recoils on his memory, "will be mightily well born." They are better than that;—they are mightily well-educated;—that is to say, their children are brought up to be as accomplished and well behaved as those of their quondam superiors; and hence has arisen a change in society, which, if it has not yet completed the justice to be done in like manner to all classes (far, God knows, from it!), has at any rate put an end to the fine marriageable distinctions between a gentlewoman off the stage, whose attractions lie in the tombs of her ancestors, and a gentlewoman on it

who delights the eyes and understandings of thousands. The fair fames of the Derbys and Cravens, and the novels of Gore and Blessington, have avenged the vulgar insults offered to the sisters of the stage by the demireps of the days of Walpole and Montagu.*

* By a singular forgetfulness we have omitted one name in our list, well known in the annals of beauty and a trying life. But the omission is as well; considering that society is not yet in a condition to do thorough justice to the victims of its perplexities.

LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU.

AN ACCOUNT OF HER LIFE AND WRITINGS.*

A party of wits and beauties.—Lady Louisa Stuart's Introductory Anecdotes.—Lady Mary's recommendation respecting marriage.—Her early life and studies.—Marries Mr. Wortley.—The union not happy.—Her introduction at court, and curious adventure there with Mr. Craggs.—Accompanies her husband in his embassy to Constantinople.—Excellence of her letters from Turkey.—Portraits of her.—Conjugal insignificance of Mr. Wortley.—Pope's unfortunate passion discussed.—Lady Mary the introducer of inoculation into England.—She separates from Mr. Wortley, and resides abroad for twenty-two years.—Reason of that sojourn.—Her addiction to scandal.—Morality of that day.—Question for moral progress.—Alleged conduct of Lady Mary abroad.—Her return to her native country.—Her last days, and curious establishment.—Character of Wortley, jun.—Specimen of Lady Mary's wit and good writing; and summary of her character.

To have a new edition of "Lady Mary," with new particulars of her life, new letters, and a new por-

* From the *Westminster Review* for 1837. Occasioned by Lord Wharncliffe's edition of her "Letters," &c.

trait, is like seeing her come back again in *propriâ personâ*, together with the circles in which she flourished. We perceive a rustling of hoop-petticoats about us, a fluttering of fans, an obeisance of perukes. We behold her in the bloom of her ascendency, the most prominent object in a party of wits and beauties, talking perhaps with Prior or with Congreve, and putting him to all his resources of repartee. The conversation would be thought a little "bold" for these times. Miss Howe and Miss Bicknell, nevertheless, are laughing outright; my Lady Winchelsea is smiling, and so is Mrs. Howard, for all her staid eyes. Steele, pretending not to see Addison, is about to say something which shall turn the equivoque into an elegance, comfortable to all parties; Addison is pretending not to hear; and Pope, with his lean earnest face and fine eyes, is standing behind her ladyship's chair, too happy to be able to screen his person and to have the advantage of her in point of height; while he is meditating to whisper a sentence in her ear, fervid with a passion she laughs at.

Alas! that neither he nor she should become the happier for all this drawing-room delight; that she, by her sarcasm and self-committals, or whatever it was, should be driven into a long exile; and that he, from the most loving of her flatterers, should become the bitterest of her denouncers, and render his hatred as well as love immortal! And yet why lament? All who have any solid pretensions make out their

case somehow, both of repute and consolation. The little, crooked, despised person, became the "Prince of the poets of his time," acknowledged by all, and nursed by many affections instead of one; and the over-flattered and presumptuous fine lady — the Duke's daughter, wit, and beauty — forced upon solitude and self-reflection, found less uneasy resources in books, and gardens, and the love of a daughter of her own; besides knowing that she should leave writings behind her admired by all the world, and the reputation of a benefactress of her species.

The present edition of her ladyship's works is by far the best that has appeared, for it contains additional information respecting herself, and a great deal of new matter from her pen, besides correcting inaccuracies and supplying omitted names. Many letters are brought forward in which the former series was deficient; and we have entirely new sets addressed to the Countesses of Pomfret and Oxford, and Sir James Stuart and his lady, besides a paper *On the State of Parties, at the Accession of George the First*, by Mr. Wortley; *An Account of the Court* at the same period, by Lady Mary herself; a curious *Appendix* respecting an extraordinary charge against her; and a very interesting set of *Introductory Anecdotes*, written, as a contemporary informs the public, by her grand-daughter, Lady Louisa Stuart, daughter of George the Third's first favourite, the Earl of Bute; a lady who has taken up her pen in her

eightieth year, as if on purpose to give us a pleasing verification of what the noble editor thinks of her—namely, that "a ray of Lady Mary's talent has fallen upon one of her descendants." Till we received this information from our contemporary, we fancied that the anecdotes were the production of the editor's cousin, Dr. Corbett, of whom he has shown a handsome anxiety to let us know that we are mainly indebted to him for the appearance of the edition. We must also not omit noticing, that the volumes, besides a new portrait of Lady Mary in her Eastern costume, contain those of Wortley her husband; of his sister Miss Wortley; of Wortley, junior, with his flighty eyes, dressed like a Turk; and of her ladyship's daughter, the Countess of Bute, looking singularly old and plain, after her dashing young mother in the frontispiece.

We are sorry we cannot but add, that the edition, with all this new interest, is not as complete, accurate, or well arranged as it might have been, and that many notes are still wanting, while some might have been spared; as the *information* respecting Smollet for instance (vol. iii. p. 106), and the slur (vol. ii. p. 218) on the character of Beard the singer, which, from all we ever read of him, we believe to be the reverse of fact. It would also have been as well if the fair and venerable writer of the anecdotes had spared, in Christian charity, and especially in a set of remarks so considerate to the fame of one lady, the reproaches intimated against another in page

51; a woman who was certainly not less conscientious than her ladyship's ancestor, whether her opinions were right or wrong, and who suffered severely for those opinions, and was born during a period of conflicting principles. It is curious to see how difficult it is for the most estimable individuals in high life to avoid giving way to a spirit of scandal and sarcasm—so beset are they with occasions for it. But above all, in this collection of the "Works" of Lady Mary, what has become of the "*Treatise*" which Spence mentions as existing on two very curious subjects, and which, from the silence of the noble editor, we may suppose to be existing still? "It was from the custom of the Turks," said her ladyship in a conversation with Spence, "that I first thought of a septennial bill for the benefit of married people, and of the advantages that might arise from our wives having no portions." *Spence's Anecdotes* (Singer's edition, p. 231). Upon which saith the ingenuous Spence, "that lady's little treatise upon these two subjects is very prettily written, and has very uncommon arguments in it. She is very strenuous for both these tenets,—that every married person should have the liberty of declaring every seventh year, whether we choose to continue to live together in that state for another seven years, or not: and she also argues, that if women had nothing but their own good qualities and merit to recommend them, it would make them more virtuous, and their husbands more happy, than in the

present marketing-way among us. She seems very earnest and serious on the subject, and wishes the legislature would take it under their consideration, and regulate those two points by her system." *ibid.* Now, why, in these legislative times, should we miss this very legislative history treatise, especially upon a subject in which the ladies are so much considered, upon which they are not soon likely to have so plain spoken an advocate? Finally, it would have completed the rich look of the edition, and its retrospective merits compared with others, if it had included Dallaway's two portraits of Lady Mary, one in her girlhood, and the other after Sir Godfrey Kneller, together with the fac-similes he gave of the handwritings of herself and Pope, Fielding, and Addison, &c. An edition intended to be final can hardly be too comprehensive. Even the whole of the little reports of conversation in Spence should have been met with; and still more desirable was the account given of Lady Mary on her return to England, by Mrs. Montagu, since it fills up an obvious gap, and one that demands supply. It shall be furnished in the course of the present article. If fact, as the best means of satisfying the curiosity newly excited in the public by the appearance of these volumes, we purpose to throw the chief part of the article into a biographical shape,—thus affording the most complete and regular account of this extraordinary woman which, after all, has yet been furnished, and bringing into play, as

we go, the information newly contributed, and the reflections to which it gives rise. At the end of it we shall extract some of the choicest morsels we can find of her wit and good sense; and conclude with what appears to us to be an impartial summary of her character, both as a writer and a woman.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, eldest daughter of Evelyn Pierrepont, then Earl of Kingston, afterwards Marquis of Dorchester and Duke of Kingston; and of Lady Mary Fielding, daughter of William the third Earl of Denbigh, was born at Thorseby, in Nottinghamshire, in the year 1690. She had two sisters by the same parents (for the Duke had two other daughters by a second wife), and one brother, who died during his father's lifetime, and whose son became second and last Duke of Kingston. One of the sisters married John Earl of Gower, and the other John Earl of Mar; which latter is the one to whom she addressed some of her best letters. Both of father's and mother's side, Lady Mary came of a stirring race; for the Pierreponts and Fieldings took active parts in the civil war, and under painful circumstances of family divisions, two brothers among the former having chosen different sides; and among the latter, a father and son. But there was genius as well as activity in her blood. The mother of Beaumont the dramatist was a Pierrepont; and, curiously enough, Lady Mary, in another Beaumont of Coleorton (the

same stock) had a common ancestor with Villiers, the witty Duke of Buckingham, who was her great uncle. The noble editor does not mention these particulars; but surely they are not uninteresting, considering the names concerned, particularly in connection with such a woman. Since the alarming discovery of the Frenchman, that, at a certain remove, every individual of a nation is related to everybody else (so that any one who can trace his family at all, may select the Duke or Prince he chooses to be descended from), it will produce a little closer satisfaction to notice the near relationship between Lady Mary and Henry Fielding, who was her second cousin. It is not so pleasant to observe the distance, which circumstances doubtless, rather than her own inclination, kept up between them; the author of Tom Jones, though a friend of hers, and treated as such, still being a sort of humble one, and addressing her in his letters with the greatest ceremony. It is true this was more in the taste of the age than it is at present; but Fielding was the poor son of the poor son of a younger brother; while she, though his cousin by the mother's side, was a Duke's daughter. It is lucky that poverty did not separate them much farther. It was told the other day of the late Duke of Norfolk, that he proposed to give a dinner to all the Howards he could bring together, who were lineally descended from "Jockey of Norfolk," the first Duke; but after finding (if we are not mistaken) several hundreds, they came upon

him by such shoals, out of lanes and alleys, and all sorts of homely modes of life, that he was fain to back in alarm out of his project.

The Fieldings, till Henry came up to mend the reputation, were not thought very clever. Lady Mary says they were all called "fair and foolish!" This may account for an anecdote reported of the great novelist — that being asked by the then Earl of Denbigh, how he came to write Fielding with the *i* first, when the Earl and the rest of his kindred wrote it with the *e*, he said he really could not inform his lordship, "unless it was that he was the first of the family that knew how to spell."

The last Duke of Kingston, who appears to have been a kind but weak man, was the subject of town-talk in connection with his widow, Miss Chudleigh, who, before she married him, had become the wife, in private, of the Hon. Augustus Hervey, afterwards Earl of Bristol. The Pierrepont family is now represented by Earl Manvers, whose ancestor, Mr. Meadows, married his grace's sister and heir, Lady Frances. But as a Wortley, Lady Mary has numerous descendants living, through the Earl of Bute, who married her daughter; and it is pleasant to see those of opposite parties contributing to the success of her works. Her ladyship was a whig; but Lord Wharncliffe, a tory, is proud to be her editor, and to style himself in the title-page, her great grandson; and in the same degree of relationship stands Lord Dudley Stuart, a liberal, to whom the

noble editor pays his acknowledgments for the free use of letters and papers. The wife of Lord Dudley is the daughter of the Prince of Canino, Lucian Bonaparte. Here is a curious mixture of bloods! Villierses, Beaumonts, Lady Marys, Stuarts, and Bonapartes! But in comes the disenchanting Frenchman, and scatters the colours of heraldry wide as Heaven does the flowers, or as gules and azure are scattered in the cheeks and eyes of bumpkins.

At four years of age, our heroine lost her mother, a special misfortune most probably in her case; for a certain habitual want of feminine self-restraint was the cause of much from which she afterwards suffered. Her grandmother, however, a very sensible woman, seems to have done something towards supplying the maternal duties. Lady Mary's mother, grandmother, and herself, had the same nurse, who did her best to render one of them, and probably all three, weak and superstitious; yet all seem to have escaped the infection; though why such intelligent women retained her in the family, we are not told. Lady Mary compares her father and mother to Sir Thomas and Lady Grandison, in Richardson's novel. This paints their characters at once; the lady a most excellent woman, at once reasonable and cordial; the gentleman a very disagreeable person, between a formalist and a man of pleasure, exacting submission from others, practising none himself, and letting most matters take their course as long as they did not interfere

with his ease. Accordingly, having provided his son with a teacher of languages, he left the boy to his tutor, and his daughter to her nurse and governess; and Lady Mary's understanding being so much better than that of her instructress, scrambled, as it were, by the side of her brother's advantages, and bore away some of his Latin, and perhaps a smattering of Greek; and this appears to be the amount of the classical education which, Dr. Dallaway says, her father gave her. Lady Mary's own account of her education was, that it was "one of the worst in the world, being exactly the same as Clarissa Harlowe's." The very fact, however, of its being one of the worst, contributed, under the circumstances, to render it one of the best, with the exception of something more feminine. The understanding, discovering its strength by the weakness which it detected in others, threw off its trammels, and secured itself a healthier growth; and to this vindication of its natural independence, and the child's unusual and miscellaneous reading, may be traced that unflinching good sense, and toleration of other creeds and opinions, for which the author of the letters became remarkable.

But if Lady Mary's father was not of a nature to be very fond of her, or do her much good, he could be very proud of her, and help to excite her vanity. The effect of the following well painted scene probably remained with her for life, though,

to a mind like hers, not without its good as well as evil.

"As a leader of the fashionable world, and a strenuous Whig in party, he (Lord Kingston) of course belonged to the Kit-Kat Club. One day, at a meeting to choose toasts for the year, a whim seized him to nominate her, then not eight years old, a candidate; alleging that she was far prettier than any lady on their list. The other members demurred, because the rules of the Club forbade them to elect a beauty whom they had never seen. 'Then you shall see her!' cried he; and in the gaiety of the moment, sent orders home to have her finely dressed, and brought to him at the tavern; where she was received with acclamations, her claim unanimously allowed, her health drank by every one present, and her name engraved, in due form, upon a drinking glass. The company consisted of some of the most eminent men in England; she went from the lap of one poet, or patriot, or statesman, to the arms of another; was feasted with sweetmeats, overwhelmed with caresses, and, what perhaps pleased her better than either, heard her wit and beauty loudly extolled on every side. Pleasure, she said, was too poor a word to express her sensations: they amounted to ecstacy. Never again, throughout her whole future life, did she pass so happy a day. Nor indeed could she; for the love of admiration, which this scene was calculated to excite or increase, could never again be so fully gratified; there is always some alloying ingredient in the cup, some drawback upon the triumphs of grown people. Her father carried on the frolic, and, we may conclude, confirmed the taste, by giving her a picture painted for the club-room, that she might be enrolled a regular toast."—p. 5.

Our little woman of letters (for such she had now been regularly installed), read all the books she could lay her hands on,—poetry, philosophy,

romances. She was so fond of the romances of the old French school, *Cleopatra*, *Cassandra*, &c., that in a blank page in one of them (the *Astrea*) she had written "in her fairest youthful hand the names and characteristic qualities of the chief personages,"—as, "the beautiful Diana, the volatile Climene, the melancholy Doris," &c. to the amount of two long columns. Her first known poetic effusion, agreeably to this taste, which delighted in mixing up the classics with love, was an *Epistle from Julia to Ovid*, which she wrote at the age of twelve. It exhibits so nice an apprehension of the reigning melody in verse, and the complimentary cant of gallantry, that if the authoress at twelve had not probably been as matured in her faculties as most young ladies at twenty, she might be suspected of having given it some after touches.

"Are love and power incapable to meet?
And must they all be wretched who are great?
Enslaved by titles, and by forms confined,
For wretched victims to the state design'd?

* * *

O love! thou pleasure never dearly bought;
Whose joys exceed the very lover's thought;
Of that soft passion, when *you* teach the art,

(she is here turning from love to her lover)

In gentle sounds it steals into the heart;
With such sweet magic does the soul surprise,
'T is only taught us better by your eyes."

This is exactly the style in which Dryden would

have addressed Lady Castlemain, or Garth (one of the Kit-Kat Club) have written verses to her own beauty on the drinking glasses. Perhaps in selecting the daughter of Augustus for her heroine, she had an eye to her own rank; and the "Ovid" she thought of may have been one of the club,—great versifiers of him and his epistles.

We next find her, at the age of fourteen, complaining that truth is not to be found either in courts or in "sanctuaries." At fifteen she has a project of an *English nunnery!* and at twenty she translates the austere *Epictetus*, no doubt from the Latin version, under the eye of her friend, Bishop Burnet. Writing to her daughter, Lady Bute, forty years afterwards, she says of the nunnery project, in allusion to the commendation of such a plan by Richardson:—

"It was a favourite scheme of mine when I was fifteen; and had I then been mistress of an independent fortune, I would certainly have executed it, and elected myself lady-abbess. There would you and your ten children have been lost for ever."

And in a subsequent letter she observes,

"Lady Stafford (who knew me better than anybody else in the world, both from her own just discernment, and my heart being ever as open to her as myself), used to tell me, that my true vocation was a monastery; and I now find, by experience, more sincere pleasure with my books and garden, than all the flutter of a court could give me."

That may be, and yet the threatened non-existence

of poor Lady Bute and her ten children have been a non-sequitur. Lady Stafford was the daughter of the famous Count de Grammont and *la belle Hamilton;* and her ladyship, backed also by "experience," and the perusal of *Boccaccio*, another lover of books and gardens, might have told her friend, that by a vocation for a nunnery, she certainly did not mean a nunnery of a very rigid order. The love of books and gardens, of influence in childhood, and repose in old age, most assuredly does not imply an indifference to any other pleasure in due season; nor did Lady Mary's monastic tendencies end in proving that it did. She became, in fact, as pretty an inhabitant of Rabelais' Abbey of the *Thelemites*, as will and pleasure could desire.

Nevertheless, we cannot help thinking, that there was one period of her life, now approaching, at which it depended upon the turn of a die, whether our heroine's vivacities might not all have compressed themselves, not indeed into a lady-abbess, but into a very good lady-wife. It really does seem to us that she only required to be a little better matched, in order to have met the comforts, or mutual good will and humanities of the wedded life more than half way; and that if the chief causes of a separation lay finally at her door (as they probably did), they began with the impatience and inattention of the party who has the staider repute.

Among the early female friends of Lady Mary was Miss, or (as it was then the custom to call

un-married young ladies) Mrs. Anne Wortley, sister of Mr. Edward Wortley Montagu, whose father, Sidney, one of the sons of the well-known Earl of Sandwich, (Pepy's hero) had added the name of Wortley to that of Montagu, in consequence of his marriage with an heiress. Edward Wortley, who was not a man of gallantry, and had taken no pains to cultivate even a favourite sister's acquaintance, happened one day to meet with Lady Mary Pierrepont in her apartments, and was so struck with her wit as well as beauty, and charmed with the unusual accomplishment of a regard for his favourite classics, that in a few days he made her a present of a superb edition of *Quintus Curtius*;—no very gallant author, but one whom she had mentioned as having never read. The present was even accompanied with some verses, not very good, but quite glowing enough from a person of his character to amount to a "declaration of love." His sister fanned the flame with all her might; and a correspondence ensued, the nature and consequence of which are thus narrated in the *Introductory Anecdotes*:—

"How soon this declaration of love in verse was followed by one in prose does not appear; but Mrs. Anne Wortley grew more eloquent in Lady Mary's praise, and more eagerly desirous of her correspondence. No wonder; since the rough draft of a letter in her brother's hand, indorsed 'For my sister to Lady M. P.' betrays that he was the writer, and she only the transcriber, of professions and encomiums that sound extravagant as addressed by one woman to another. But she did

not live to be long the medium through which they passed; a more direct correspondence soon began, and was continued after her decease. When married, Mr. Wortley and Lady Mary agreed to put by and preserve as memorials of the days of courtship, all their letters; a curious collection, and very different from what a romance-writer would have framed; on his side, no longer complimentary, but strikingly expressive of a real strong passion, combated in vain by a mind equally strong, which yielded to it against its conviction and against its will. '*Celui qui aime plus qu'il ne voudroit*,' as a French author somewhere says, is, after all, the person in whom love has taken the strongest hold. They were perpetually on the point of breaking together; he felt and knew that they suited each other very ill: he saw, or thought he saw, his rivals encouraged, if not preferred: he was more affronted than satisfied with her assurance of a *sober* esteem and regard: and yet every struggle to get free did but end where it set out, leaving him still a captive, galled by his chain, but unable to sever one link of it effectually.

"After some time thus spent in fluctuations, disputes, and lover's quarrels, he at length made his proposals to Lord Dorchester, who received them favourably, and was very gracious to him, till the *Grim-Gribber* part of the business—the portion and settlements—came under consideration; but then broke off the match with great anger, on account of a disagreement which subsequent events had rendered memorable. We see how the practice of a man's entailing his estate upon his eldest son while as yet an unborn child, an unknown being, is ridiculed in the *Tatler* and *Spectator*, whose authors, it may be observed, had no estates to entail. Mr. Wortley, who *had*, entertained the same opinions. Possibly they were originally his own, and promulgated by Addison and Steele at his suggestion; for, as he always liked to think for himself, many of his notions were singular and speculative. However this might be, he upheld the system, and acted upon it, offering to make

the best provision in his power for Lady Mary, but steadily refusing to settle his landed property upon a son who, for aught he knew, might prove unworthy to possess it—might be a spendthrift, an idiot, or villain.

"Lord Dorchester, on the other hand, said that these philosophic theories were very fine, but *his* grandchildren should not run the risk of being left beggars; and as he had to do with a person of no common firmness, the treaty ended there.

"The secret correspondence and intercourse went on as before; and shortly Lady Mary acquainted her lover that she was peremptorily commanded to accept the offers of another suitor, ready to close with all her father's terms; to settle handsome pin-money, jointure, provision for heirs, and so forth; and, moreover, concede the point most agreeable to herself, that of giving her a fixed establishment in London, which, by-the-bye, Mr. Wortley had always protested against. Lord Dorchester seems to have asked no questions touching her inclination in either instance. A man who is now about to sell an estate, seldom thinks of inquiring whether it will please or displease his tenantry to be transferred to a new landlord; and just as little then did parents, in disposing of a daughter, conceive it necessary to consult her will and pleasure. For a young lady to interfere, or claim a right of choice, was almost thought, as it is in France, a species of indelicacy. Lady Mary nevertheless declared, though timidly, her utter antipathy to the person proposed to her. Upon this, her father summoned her to his awful presence, and after expressing surprise at her presumption in questioning his judgment, assured her he would not give her a single sixpence if she married anybody else. She sought the usual recourse of poor damsels in the like case, begging permission to split the difference (if we may so say), by not marrying at all; but he answered that she should be immediately sent to a remote place in the country, reside there during his life, and at his death have no portion save a moderate annuity. Relying upon the effect of these threats,

he proceeded as if she had given her fullest and freest consent; settlements were drawn, wedding-clothes bought, the day was appointed, and everything made ready, when she left the house to marry Mr. Wortley."—p. 17.

Lady Mary has expressed it better. She seems to imply also, that Mr. Wortley's hand was not her only alternative. We will quote the whole passage alluded to, as it is characteristic both of herself and of Spence, in one of whose letters it is to be found:—

"'I already desired,' says he, 'to be acquainted with Lady Mary, and could never bring it about, though we were so often together in London. Soon after we came to this place (Rome) her ladyship came here; and in five days I was well acquainted with her. She is one of the most shining characters in the world, but shines like a comet; she is all irregularity, and always wandering; the most wise, the most imprudent; loveliest, most disagreeable; best natured, cruellest woman in the world; 'all things by turns, and nothing long.' She was married young; and she told me with that freedom which travelling gives, that she was never in so great a hurry of thought, as the month before she was married; she scarce slept any one night that month. You know she was one of the most celebrated beauties of her day, and had a vast number of offers, and the thing that kept her awake was *who to fix upon*. She was determined as to two points from the first; that is, to be married to somebody, and not to be married to the man her father advised her to have. The last night of the month she determined; and in the morning left the husband of her father's choice buying the wedding-ring, and scuttled away to be married to Mr. Wortley."—*Spence's Anecdotes, ut sup.*, p. 18.

This phrase "*scuttling away*," was no very sen-

timental way of putting the case; but it was very lively and characteristic, and just what was to be expected from the writer of the letters to Mrs. Hewett, her friend, at that time; which, if Mr. Wortley had seen, or seen the like, no wonder he felt a little ante-bridal trepidation.

Now it is clear to us, from the above statements, and from all that was said and done by the parties, before and after marriage, that there was no real love on either side. There may indeed have been a "real strong *passion*" in one or both, for having their way; much suffering and struggling with the will and the desire of ascendancy, and a final resolution to indulge it, happen what might; but real, strong love, is not the thing to hesitate, and calculate, and quarrel. It is too much inclined to take everything for granted; and too humble and absorbed in its object, not to be glad to make every concession. The whole truth of the matter we take to be, that both parties were young and handsome; that the gentleman was somewhat dull, and perplexed by the very vivacity he admired; and the lady a little impatient at the dullness, in a gentleman otherwise so good and good-looking. Probably she endeavoured to pique him into admiration by coquetry with others (a dangerous step); and her impatience rendered it difficult for her to suppress a few sarcastic evidences of her superiority in point of wit; and hence, doubt on both sides before marriage, and speedy confirmation of it afterwards.

The writer of the *Introductory Anecdotes* thinks it "hard to divine" why Mr. Edward Wortley has been represented by Dallaway and others "as a dull, phlegmatic country gentleman, of a tame genius, and moderate capacity," or, "of parts more solid than brilliant," which, "in common parlance, is a civil way of saying the same thing." But we should like to know what there is to show to the contrary; and how much there is not, throughout these volumes, to make out the character; not, indeed, in its dullest sense—far from it—but still dull in comparison with a husband more suitable to Lady Mary, and quite compatibly so with his attainments as a scholar and a politician. A man of very limited capacity may be all which the writer speaks of; praised by his circle for soundness of judgment (especially if he be a man of quality and staid manners), a professor of scholarship and polite literature,—one who has made the grand tour, and mastered divers languages,—nay, a holder of unconventional opinions, member of a club of wits, and one who has chosen Addison himself for his bosom friend; and yet it does not follow that all this may not have been the result of a want instead of an abundance of high intellectual qualities, and justly terminate in a mediocrity of reputation. You may differ with society out of a paucity as well as an abundance of ideas, especially if your self-will and your consciousness of good intention are pretty much on a par. There are dull fellows on the side

of innovation, as well as Rousseaus and Platos. Many a solemn pretender has been member of a literary club; and Addison himself, with all his wit, could not talk till he had had his bottle, and might have admitted to his friendship a gentleman "more solid than brilliant," without the implication of anything very particular *sub rosâ*. In short, we would refer to the letters of Mr. Wortley Montagu in the volumes before us, and ask what there is in these beyond a decent amount of intellect? His early ones imply the jealousies and hesitation of an understanding inferior to the lady's; and his later, a mere turn for matter-of-fact, or the duller parts of scholarship. Before marriage, he was always expressing a desire to know what was passing in his mistress's heart; a curiosity so teazing and futile, that she could not repress an impatience at it. She says, in a mixed tone of annoyance and naïveté, "Pray which way would you see into my heart? You can frame no guesses about it, from either my speaking or writing; and supposing I should attempt to show it you, I know no other way."

But, dull or not, or whether there was any love or not between them before marriage, he seems to have had the opportunity of realizing her affection afterwards, could he have shown a reasonable measure of it himself, either towards her or his child; for in both these respects he appears to have been as dull as in others; so much so, indeed, that the thing amounts to a mystery. Shortly after the

marriage, he took occasion of his parliamentary duties to be away from his wife as much as possible, keeping her in the country while he was in town, and never seeing either her or his child for five or six months together. The following is the constant tone of her earlier matrimonial letters, intermingled with expressions of fondness:—

"Your short letter came to me this morning; but I won't quarrel with it, since it brought me good news of your health. I wait with impatience for that of your return."—vol. i. p. 194.

"I continue indifferently well, and endeavour as much as I can to preserve myself from spleen and melancholy; not for my own sake, but in the condition I am, I believe it may be of very ill consequence; passing whole days alone as I do, I do not always find it possible."—p. 197.

"I don't believe you expect to hear from me so soon! I remember you did not so much as desire it; but I will not be so nice as to quarrel with you on that point; perhaps you would laugh at that delicacy, which is, however, an attendant upon tender friendship. I expect a letter next post to tell me you are well in London, and that your business will not detain you long from her who cannot live without you."—p. 198.

"I am alone, without any amusement to take up my thoughts. I am in circumstances in which melancholy is apt to prevail even over all amusements, dispirited and alone, and you write me quarrelling letters."—p 199.

"How can you be so careless? Is it because you don't love writing?"—p. 202.

"You know where I am, and I have not once heard from you. I am tired of this place, because I do not; and if you persist in your silence, I will return to Wharncliffe."—p. 203.

"Your absence increases my melancholy so much, I fright myself with imaginary horrors; and shall always be fancying

dangers for you, while you are out of my sight. I am afraid of Lord H———, I am afraid of everything; there wants but little of my being afraid of the smallpox for you; so unreasonable are my fears, which, however, proceed from an unlimited love. If I lose you—I cannot bear that if—which, bless God, is without probability; but since the loss of my poor unhappy brother, I dread every evil."—p. 204.

"I am concerned I have not heard from you; you might have writ while I was on the road, and your letter would have met me here. I am in abundance of pain about our dear child: though I am convinced it is both silly and wicked to set my heart too fondly on anything in this world, yet I cannot overcome myself as far as to think of parting with him with the resignation I ought to do. I hope and I beg of God he may live to be a comfort to us both."—p. 205.

"I know very well that nobody was ever teazed into a liking; and 't is perhaps harder to revive a past one than to overcome an aversion; but I cannot forbear any longer telling you, I think you use me very unkindly. I don't say so much of your absence as I should do, if you was in the country and I in London; because I would not have you believe that I am impatient to be in town; but I am very sensible I parted with you in July, and it is now the middle of November—as if this was not hardship enough, you do not tell me you are sorry for it. You write seldom, and with so much indifference as shows you hardly think of me at all. I complain of ill health, and you only say you hope it is not so bad as I make it. You never inquire after your child. I would fain flatter myself you have more kindness for him and me than you express; but I reflect with grief that a man that is ashamed of passions that are natural and reasonable, *is generally proud of those that are shameful and silly.*"—p. 206.

"Oh, oh!" as they say in Parliament. But here, we conceive, lay the secret of this growing aliena-

tion. The lady, in all respects, was too much for him,—had too much fondness (if he could but have responded to it), too much vivacity of all sorts, and even too much of his favourite "good sense." She saw further than he did, and with greater brilliancy. Her eye cast a lustre, and dazzled and humiliated his plainer perceptions. Gaiety and tenderness she might probably have taken as substitutes for what was wanting in mind; but these he was too formal, or too afraid of self-committals to give. Not liking to acknowledge his inferiority, he must lower her to his level by doubts of her moral qualities, her sincerity, and good temper. By degrees he probably did try them a little overmuch; and she, beginning to despair of finally winning him, looked about for other consolations, not, however, without an occasional twit at him for disappointing her. After one or two more bitter complainings, they take a sarcastic turn:—

"Adieu. I wish you would learn of Mr. Steele to write your wife."—p. 212.

What a pity, by the way, she could not have married such a man as Steele! Her money, and prudence in money matters, without the coldness of his own wife, would have given him what he wanted; and he might have kept her tenderness and respect alive by an understanding as good as her own, and a vivacity no way inferior. Yet, perhaps, a husband of more manifest ascendancy,

provided he was loving also, would have suited her still better. The height of her spirit may have required to be overtopped.

At length complaint ceases, and advice-giving commences, and in no very complimentary style. The following touch, however, accompanies the Steele inuendo:—

"I am told that you are very secure at Newark: if you are so in the west, I cannot see why you should set up in three different places, unless it be to treble the expense."—p. 211.

"'T is surprising to me that you are all this while in the midst of your friends without being sure of a place, when so many insignificant creatures come in without any opposition."—p. 217.

"Your letter very much vexed me. I cannot imagine why you should doubt being the better for a place of that consideration, which it is in your power to lay down, whenever you dislike the measures that are taken."—p. 218.

"You seem not to have received my letters, or not to have understood them; you had been chosen undoubtedly at York, had you declared in time."—p. 220.

If her temper was not good, however, all is accounted for at once; for Wortley was hardly the man to supply any defects on her part out of his own stock, or to bear with them very long. Her descendants, it is true, say her temper was good, and that her "servants" thought so; which is saying much: but report has made loud insinuations to the contrary; and her sarcasms and self-will, we must say, go nigh to confirm it. Still, a woman of her great good sense, might have modified, if she could not

get rid of the infirmity, had her husband's intellect been at all on a par with hers, or his heart capable of calling hers forth. But this, alas! was not the case.

Such is the state of feeling between the parties, when Mr. Wortley obtains a place in the Treasury, and is forced to bring Lady Mary to court. She attracts the notice to be expected by her wit and beauty. The Prince of Wales (George the Second) calls out to the Princess "in a rapture," to look "how becomingly Lady Mary was dressed." "Lady Mary always dresses well," said the Princess, drily, and returned to her cards. But a liberty taken with her ladyship by "Mr. Secretary Craggs" (Pope's friend) lets us perhaps more into the interior of her life and manners at this period, than the relator of it seems to suppose.

"A former edition," says Lady Louisa, "tells us that the court of George the First was modelled upon that of Louis the Fifteenth." A whimsical model! Since Louis was about seven years old when George, a man of sixty, ascended the British throne. One would think Louis the *Fourteenth* must have been the person meant, but that the retired habits of the English monarch accorded no better with the stately ceremonial of the elder French one, than with the amusements and regulations of his great-grandson's nursery. George the First went to the play or opera in a sedan-chair, and sat, like another gentleman, in the corner of a

lady's (a German lady's) box, with a couple of Turks in waiting, instead of lords or grooms of the bedchamber. In one respect his court, if court it could be called, bore some resemblance to the old establishment of Versailles. There was a Madame de Maintenon. Of the three favourite ladies who had accompanied him from Hanover, viz. Mademoiselle de Schulenberg, the Countess Platen, and Madame Kilmansegg, the first alone, whom he created Duchess of Kendal, was lodged in St. James's Palace, and had such respect paid her as much confirmed the rumour of a left-hand marriage. She presided at the King's evening parties, consisting of the Germans who formed his familiar society, a few English ladies, and fewer Englishmen: among them Mr. Craggs the Secretary of State, who had been at Hanover in the Queen's time, and by thus giving the *entrée* in private, passed for a sort of favourite.

"Lady Mary's journal related a ridiculous adventure of her own at one of these royal parties; which, by-the-by, stood in great need of some laughing matter to enliven them, for they seem to have been even more dull than it was reasonable to expect they should be. She had one evening a particular engagement that made her wish to be dismissed unusually early; she explained her reasons to the Duchess of Kendal, and the duchess informed the king, who, after a few complimentary remonstrances, appeared to acquiesce. But when he saw her about to take her leave, he began battling the point afresh, declaring it was unfair and perfidious to cheat him in such a manner, and saying many other fine things, in spite of which

she at last contrived to escape. At the foot of the great stairs she ran against Secretary Craggs, just coming in, who stopped to inquire what was the matter? were the company put off? She told him why she went away, and how urgently the king had pressed her to stay longer: possibly dwelling on that head with some small complacency. Mr. Craggs made no remark; but, when he had heard all, snatching her up in his arms as a nurse carries a child, he ran full speed with her up stairs, deposited her within the ante-chamber, kissed both her hands respectfully (still not saying a word), and vanished. The pages seeing her returned, they knew not how, hastily threw open the inner doors, and, before she had recovered her breath, she found herself again in the king's presence. '*Ah! la revoila*,' cried he and the duchess, extremely pleased, and began thanking her for her obliging change of mind. The motto on all palace gates is 'Hush' as Lady Mary very well knew. She had not to learn that mystery and caution ever spread their awful wings over the precincts of a court; where nobody knows what dire mischief may ensue from one unlucky syllable babbled about anything, or about *nothing* at a wrong time. But she was bewildered, fluttered, and entirely off her guard; so beginning giddily with, 'Oh lord, sir! I have been so frightened!' she told his majesty the whole story exactly as she would have told it to any one else. He had not done exclaiming, nor his Germans wondering, when again the door flew open, and the attendants announced Mr. Secretary Craggs, who, but that moment arrived, it should seem, entered with the usual obeisance, and as composed an air as if nothing had happened. '*Mais comment donc, Monsieur Craggs*,' said the king, going up to him, '*est ce que c'est l'usage de ce pays de porter des belles comme un sac de froment?*' ('Is it the custom of this country to carry about fair ladies like a sack of wheat?') The minister, struck dumb by this unexpected attack, stood a minute or two, not knowing which way to look; then recovering his self-possession, answered, with a low bow, 'There is nothing I

would not do for your majesty's satisfaction.' This was coming off tolerably well; but he did not forgive the tell-tale culprit, in whose ear, watching his opportunity when the king turned from them, he muttered a bitter reproach, with a round oath to enforce it; 'which I durst not resent,' continued she, 'for I had drawn it upon myself; and indeed I was heartily vexed at my own imprudence.'"—p. 37.

Now, as subjects are understood to have no wills of their own in the presence of royalty, it was, without doubt, an oversight in Lady Mary to behave as if she had one; and as a gallant confidence carries much before it, and success is its vindication, Mr. Secretary Craggs must be allowed the glory of having performed his achievement well, the oath and rebuke excepted; unless, indeed, those are to be regarded as subtle proofs of his very gallantry,—manifestations of the dire necessity which he had felt of hazarding offence to so charming a provoker. But how came he to hazard the offence at all? How came he, James Craggs, the son of a footman (according to her own account of him), to take such a liberty under any circumstances with the high-born and worthily married Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, the wife of a lord of the treasury, and daughter of the House of Kingston? The reason she gives for not resenting the freedom is none to the reader. Compare the mysterious and deferential manner in which he is treated in this anecdote of hers, in her contemporary journal, with the following, which she gives of him in her *Account of the Court of George the First.*

"Young Craggs came about this time to Hanover, where his father sent him to take a view of that court in his tour of travelling. He was in his first bloom of youth; and had so strong an appearance of that perfection, that it was called beauty by the generality of women; though, in my opinion, there was a coarseness in his face and shape, that had more the air of a porter than a gentleman; and, if fortune had not interposed her mighty power, he might by his birth have appeared in that figure; his father being nothing more considerable at his first appearance in the world than footman to Lady Mary Mordaunt, the gallant Duchess of Norfolk, who had always half a dozen intrigues to manage."

After giving a terrible account of his father, she resumes:—

"Young Craggs had great vivacity, a happy memory, and flowing elocution: he was brave and generous, and had an appearance of open-heartedness in his manner that gained him a universal good will, if not a universal esteem. It is true, there appeared a heat and want of judgment in all his words and actions, which did not make him very valuable in the eyes of cool judges; but Madame Platen (the elector's mistress) was not of that number. His youth and fire made him appear a conquest worthy of her charms, and her charms made her appear very well worthy his passionate addresses."—p. 112.

Such was the person whom the wife of the staid Mr. Wortley permitted to seize hold of her "like a sack of wheat," and run up stairs to re-deposit her in an ante-chamber, without thinking it necessary to say a word. It might have been a very gallant action, and much admired by ladies of an extemporaneous turn of mind; but would the son of the footman have ventured it within the husband's

knowledge, or with a lady of Mr. Wortley's own sort of repute?

Mr. Wortley, not having succeeded much as a minister at home, was appointed, in 1716, ambassador to Constantinople, where he succeeded as little; but he took his wife with him, who was destined to triumph at all events; and thus he was the cause of her charming the world with the most luxurious pictures ever yet given of a luxurious people, and of bringing away with her a talisman for the preservation of beauty. Her letters from the Levant are so much in the interior of Turkish taste and feeling, that Mr. Dallaway, although they told him to the contrary, could not help seeing in them the long-supposed fact, now finally disproved, of her having been admitted inside the harem. Her visit to the lovely Fatima is as if all English beauty, in her shape, had gone to compare notes with all Turkish; and if she soon leaves the coldness or reserve of her country behind her, in her sympathy with languishing airs, illustrative dances, and rakish and sceptical Effendis, her communications only become so much the more original and true, and convert her into a kind of Sultana herself, ravishing the wits of Turkey, Mr. Pope, and posterity. No wonder her portrait was afterwards painted in the eastern habit. The sensual graces both of her mind and countenance (not to use the words offensively), were brought forward by the new scenes to which she had travelled; and yet so much confirmation

was given, at the same time, to the best tendencies of her tolerant and liberal good sense, and she did so much good as the importer of inoculation, that she had reason to look on her new paraphernalia with pride. We beg leave to say, however, that we prefer the way in which she wears them in the portrait painted by Sir Godfrey, of which there is a poor engraving in Mr. Dallaway's edition. We do not at all hold with the arm a-kimbo exactions of the one in the frontispiece before us; besides doubting whether the face is done justice to. We feel sure, indeed, it is not. The intellect is not there. It is too hard, and bold, and vulgarly pretty. We protest against it in the name of all the Sultans; not excepting him who fell in love with the turn-up nose and pretty audacities of Roxalana. A true woman's boldness never is a man's, and cannot be mistaken for it. It has nothing to do with arms a-kimbo.

Two points are clear throughout these and all her future letters,—that her good sense (making allowance for a deficiency in sentiment, and a very little superfluous aristocracy) was of the soundest and most uncompromising order, with an ever-increasing tendency to universal justice; and that her husband, except as holder of the purse, and a gentleman for whom circumstances and a kindly habit maintained a reasonable consideration, had already become, to all prominent purposes, an individual of no mark or likelihood,—a sleeping partner. Nobody seems to

think of him as she travels, except out of delicacy towards his companion. Gallants at Vienna and elsewhere do not see him. Pope makes flagrant love to her in his letters, as if no such person existed; or adds his compliments to him, as if the love-making was not at all in the way.

We come now to the second disputed point in her history. Pope, who seems to have made her acquaintance not long before she left England, was dazzled by the combination of rank, beauty, and accomplishments into an overwhelming passion. He became an ardent correspondent; and the moment she returned, prevailed on her to come and live near him at Twickenham. Both he and she were then at the zenith of their reputation; and here commences the sad question, what it was that brought so much love to so much hate,—*tantas animis cœlestibus iras.* Question, however, it is no longer, for the *Introductory Anecdotes* have settled it. To attribute it to Pope's jealousy of her wit, and to certain imbroglios about the proprietorship and publication of her *Town Eclogues*, was very idle. Pope could no more be jealous of her wit, than the sun of the moon; or, to make a less grand simile, than the bee in its garden of the butterfly taking a few sips. "Her own statement" (and a very tremendous statement it was, for all its levity), "was this: that at some ill-chosen time, when she least expected what romances call *a declaration*, he made such passionate love to her as, in spite of her utmost

endeavours to be angry and look grave, provoked an immediate fit of laughter; from which moment he became her implacable enemy."

A pause comes upon the spirit and the tongue at hearing such an explanation as this;—a pause in which no one of any imagination can help having a deep sense of the blackness of the mortification with which the poor, mis-shaped, applauded poet, must have felt his lustre smitten, and his future recollections degraded. To say that he had any right to make love to her is one thing; yet to believe that her manners, and cast of character, as well as the nature of the times, and of the circles in which she moved, had given no license, no encouragement, no pardoning hope to the presumption, is impossible; and to trample in this way upon the whole miserable body of his vanity and humility, upon all which the consciousness of acceptability and glory among his fellow-creatures, had given to sustain himself, and all which in so poor, and fragile, and dwarfed, and degrading a shape, required so much to be so sustained;—assuredly it was inexcusable,—it was inhuman. At all events, it would have been inexcusable, had anything in poor human nature been inexcusable; and had a thousand things not encouraged the flattered beauty to resent a hope so presumptuous from one unlike herself. But if she was astonished, as she professed to be, at his thus trespassing beyond barriers which she had continually suffered to be approached, she might

have been more humane in her astonishment. A little pity might, at least, have divided the moment with contempt. It was not necessary to be quite so cruel with one so insignificant. She had address:—could she not have had recourse to a little of it, under circumstances which would have done it such special honour? She had every advantage on her side:—could not even this induce her to put a little more heart and consideration into her repulse? Oh, Lady Mary! A duke's daughter wert thou, and a beauty, and a wit, and a very triumphant and flattered personage, and covered with glory as with lute-string and diamonds; and yet false measure didst thou take of thy superiority, and didst not see how small thou becamest in the comparison when thou didst thus, with laughing cheeks, trample under foot the poor little *immortal!*

On the other hand, manifold as were Pope's excuses, in comparison with hers, unworthily did he act, both for his love and fame, in afterwards resenting her conduct as he did, and making her the object of his satire. The writer of the *Introductory Anecdotes* pronounces a judgment unbefitting her acuteness in falling into the commonplace opinion that Pope's letters, however "far-fetched" and "extravagant," are expressive "neither of passion, nor affection, nor any natural feeling whatsoever." They are undoubtedly not expressive of the highest of any of these things, otherwise they would not have been written in so artificial a style. But it

does not follow that they expressed none; or that a man, bred up in the schools of Balzac and Voiture, and writing to a wit, with a consciousness that his own repute for wit was his best recommendation, might not, out of real feeling, as well as false, clothe genuine emotions in artificial words. He might even resort to them to express a height of passion, which he wanted, or thought he wanted, genius to vent otherwise; and, after all, passion itself has not seldom a tendency to exaggerate phrases, out of a like instinct. An excessive state of mind may seek excessive words to do itself justice. The very youngest and most natural of all love, in enthusiastic temperaments, often talks or writes in a way incomprehensible to staider ones, as Shakspeare has shown us in *Romeo and Juliet;* and we really believe Pope's love to have been, in some respects, as true, and as *green* as theirs. That it was not of the highest order, we admit; and one of the great proofs of it is this,—that he afterwards allowed himself to write of her as he did,—to treat her with contumely, and even associate her image with nauseous ideas,—a desecration which no lover ever permits to a noble passion, however it may have terminated. As to his pretence that his allusions were not made to herself, it was manifestly disingenuous; it was a part of the unworthiness; and only excusable upon considerations which humiliate while they excuse.

It is fortunately a relief to turn from the sight of Lady Mary as a beauty, to consider her in the cha-

racter of a mother; and, what is more, as a public benefactress. On her return from Constantinople, she introduced inoculation for the smallpox into England, through the medium of the medical attendant of the embassy. She had lost her only brother by the disease, and (what Pope would have put into the same couplet) her own beautiful eyelashes; and she was resolved to give her family and the world the benefit of a practice, which promised to extend the salvation of life and beauty to millions. She began, with courageous love, upon her own offspring, and lived to see the innovation triumph, but through such opposition for several years, that she honestly confessed she often repented her philanthropy. If this abates some of the lustre of her good-will, it leaves her perhaps in still stronger possession of the merits of her first perseverance, and of the many sacrifices of time and spirit; for she consented to be hawked about as a sort of nurse and overseer, in families that required comfort under the experiment. Her descendant tells us, that when four great physicians were deputed by Government to watch the progress of her daughter's inoculation, they "betrayed not only such incredulity as to its success, but such an unwillingness to have it succeed,—such an evident spirit of rancour and *malignity*—that she never cared to leave the child with them one second, lest it should in some secret way suffer from their interference." These must surely have been a mother's terrors, aggravated

perhaps by a little of her own sarcasm and vehemence. We dare say she contrived to make the physicians appear very small in their own eyes with her topping wit; and they were fain to assert their dignity by trying to look big and contemptuous. We should like to have seen their names. Garth could surely not have been one of them (on looking into his biography we see he was just dead); but neither could any one else, who was worthy of belonging to the profession,—one of the most truly liberal in the persons of its genuine members. A true physician, professing as he does, an art that ascertains so little, and that brings him acquainted with his fellow-creatures so widely, becomes almost of necessity, if he is a gentleman, and has a brain, one of the modestest and most generous of philosophers.

While abroad, Lady Mary and her husband, besides Constantinople, visited several parts of Germany; and on their return, came through the Archipelago, touched at the coast of Africa, and crossing the Mediterranean to Genoa, reached home through Lyons and Paris; from all which places we have letters of the liveliest, and, as they were felt to be then, still more than now, of the most literal description; for a traveller of so vivacious a kind was till then unknown, and her sex gave the novelty additional effect. The manners of Italy, being a mixture of the light and solid beyond those of any other nation, she found especially congenial

with her disposition; and when, in the year 1739, she resolved to pass the remainder of her life on the continent, to Italy she went, and staid there, or in the neighbourhood, till within a year of her death.

The reason of her thus passing twenty-two years in a foreign country, is one of the puzzles of her biography. Dallaway says it was on account of "declining health." The opinion of her grand-daughter on the subject is given as follows:—

"Why Lady Mary left her own country, and spent the last two-and-twenty years of her life in a foreign land, is a question which has been repeatedly asked, and never can be answered with certainty, for want of any positive evidence or assurance on the subject. It is very possible, however, that the solution of this profound mystery, like that of some riddles which put the ingenuity of guessers to the farthest stretch, would prove so simple as to leave curiosity blank and baffled. Lady Mary, writing from Venice (as it appears in the first year of her absence), tells Lady Pomfret that she had long been persuading Mr. Wortley to go abroad, and at last, tired of delay, had set out alone, he promising to follow her; which, as yet, parliamentary attendance and other business had prevented his doing; but till she knew whether to expect him or not, she could not proceed to meet her (Lady Pomfret) at Rome. If this was the real truth, and there seems no reason to doubt it, we may easily conceive farther delays to have taken place, and their re-union to have been so deferred from time to time, that, insensibly, living asunder became the natural order of things, in which both acquiesced without any great reluctance. But if, on the contrary, it was only the colour they chose to give the affair; if the husband and wife—she in her fiftieth year, he several years older—had determined upon a separation, nothing can be more likely than that they settled it quietly and

deliberately between themselves, neither proclaiming it to the world, nor consulting any third person; since their daughter was married, their son disjoined and alienated from them, and there existed nobody who had a right to call them to an account, or inquire into what was solely their own business. It admits of little doubt that their dispositions were unsuitable, and Mr. Wortley had sensibly felt it even while a lover. When at length convinced that in their case the approach of age would not have the harmonizing effect which it has been sometimes known to produce upon minds originally but ill assorted, he was the very man to think within himself, 'If we cannot add to each other's happiness, why should we do the reverse? Let us be the friends at a distance which we could not hope to remain by continuing uneasily yoked together.' And that Lady Mary's wishes had always pointed to a foreign residence is clearly to be inferred from a letter she wrote to him before their marriage, when it was in debate where they should live while confined to a very narrow income. How infinitely better it would be, she urges, to fix their abode in Italy, amidst every source of enjoyment, every object that could interest the mind and amuse the fancy, than to vegetate—she does not use the word, but one may detect the thought—in an obscure country retirement at home!

"These arguments, it is allowed, rest upon surmise and conjecture; but there is proof that Lady Mary's departure from England was not by any means hasty or sudden; for in a letter to Lady Pomfret, dated the 2nd of May, 1739, she announces her design of going abroad that summer; and she did not begin her journey till the end of July—three months afterwards. Other letters are extant, affording equal proof that Mr. Wortley and she parted upon the most friendly terms, and indeed, as no couple could have done who had had any recent quarrel or cause of quarrel. She wrote to him from Dartford, her first stage; again a few lines from Dover, and again the moment she arrived at Calais. Could this have passed, or

would the petty details about servants, carriages, prices, &c., have been entered into between persons in a state of mutual displeasure? Not to mention that his preserving, docketing, and endorsing with his own hand even these slight notes, as well as all her subsequent letters, shows that he received nothing which came from her with indifference. His confidence in her was also very strongly testified by a transaction that took place when she had been abroad about two years. Believing that her influence and persuasions might still have some effect upon their unfortunate son, he entreated her to appoint a meeting with him, form a judgment of his present disposition, and decide what course it would be best to take, either in furthering or opposing his future projects. On the head of money, too, she was to determine with how much he should be supplied, and very particularly enjoined to make it suppose it came, not from his father, but herself. These were full powers to delegate—such as every woman would not be trusted with in the families where conjugal union is supposed to reign most uninterruptedly."—p. 89.

Of the son here spoken of, we shall give an account before we conclude. The daughter was Lady Bute. As to Mr. Wortley, there is no doubt a great deal of truth in what is here said of him, and the whole statement is given with equal shrewdness and delicacy: but does it contain all the truth? Is the main truth of the whole business intimated at last?

Let us look back a little; and above all, let us refer the reader to her letters. We cannot quote many of the passages to which we allude. We must employ our extracts with worthier matter. But in stating the spirit of them, he will be enabled to draw

his own conclusions. Lady Mary, then, for some time after her return to England, with the exception of the trouble she incurred by her zeal for inoculation (which did her but more good in the eyes of the worthiest), led a life of triumphant wit and beauty, and at one time appears to have obtained a reputation for solidity in her choice of acquaintances. In Gay's delightful imitation of a passage in Ariosto—"The welcome to Pope on his return from Greece," (that is to say, the conclusion of his Homer)—she is introduced the first of the female train, and in the following high terms:—

> "What lady's that, to whom he gently bends?
> Who knows not her? Ah, those are Wortley's eyes:
> How art thou honour'd, number'd with her friends!
> For she distinguishes the good and wise.
> The sweet-tongued Murray near her side attends."

This was afterwards the famous Earl of Mansfield. Among her other acquaintances were all the chief wits of the time (though Pope's particular friends, Swift, Gay, and others, most likely dropped her when he did), together with Lord and Lady Harvey, Lady Rich, Miss Skirret (afterwards Lady Walpole), Mrs. Murray, the Countess of Stafford (before mentioned), the Countesses of Pomfret and Oxford, and the famous Duchess of Marlborough, who constituted her one of the few favourites she adhered to; probably because she feared her wit. These ladies, however, were of various reputations; the times themselves, as we shall show before we

conclude, were not very scrupulous, at least in high life; and to distinguish "the good and wise," in the sense of good-natured Gay, would allow a handsome latitude of selection. Now a reader need only glance at Lady Mary's letters to see, that she was not less distinguished for wit, than prone to indulge in sarcasm, in scandal, and in every free range of opinions of all sorts; and if he peruses the letters attentively, he will assuredly violate no charity in coming to the conclusion, that the woman who has the habit of talking as she does, would have been a wonderful woman indeed, if under all these circumstances, she had not been free in action as well as talk, and indulged in the license she is fond of attributing to others. Freedom of tongue, it is true, does not of necessity imply licence of action, much less does freedom of theory; but in her case, a reader is struck with the conviction that it does; and circumstances, then and afterwards, go to prove it; not excepting those which had been submitted to the public in the appendix. The reason, therefore, which induced Lady Mary to quit England for an abode on the Continent, we take to be threefold: first, that the disposition of her husband and herself were incompatible; second, that she had made almost all her friends enemies by taking liberties with their names; and third, that in certain matters, her independence of conduct was such as to render it impossible for the husband either to live with, or to separate from her, without danger of public scandal;

therefore, as he foresaw its continuation, he very sensibly, and like a man philosophical from temperament and self-regard, proposed, or agreed to a proposal, that they should live apart, without noise,—without any show of hostility,—without manifestations of any sort calculated to subject either of them to more talk than could be helped; and *upon the understanding* (for this is most likely) that the wife should never return to England during the life of the husband; *for she never did so, but did the moment he died.* In other words, they were not to inhabit the same country. Comfort, and his own habits on his side, and independent action, and a handsome allowance of money on hers, demanded that they should live apart in two different lands. To ourselves, these reasons appear so extremely probable,—in fact—so difficult to help forming themselves in the mind,—as to be conclusive; and we think they will be equally so to any one who reads the three volumes attentively. Indeed, anybody acquainted with certain "circles," will laugh at us grave, reforming critics, for thinking it necessary to be so judicial in our argument; but as we regard it neither with a levity nor a gravity of their sort,—neither a levity corporate, nor a gravity conventional,—but have in view the largest purposes of candour, we feel that the public have a right to an express opinion on the subject. All that is said of the friendliness and family confidence still maintained between Lady Mary and her husband, *by*

letter, goes for nothing; first,—because it *was* by letter, *and never by any other mode*, during the two-and-twenty years that he continued to live; and, secondly, because under that, and other circumstances, it is quite compatible with the arrangements we have supposed. Both parties were still connected by means of their son and daughter; both were of the same prudent turn of mind as to pecuniary matters; and though Wortley was not a shining man, he was not a silly one,—much less defective in a sense of personal decorum, and of the desirableness of tranquillity. "Study your own mode of life," he would say; "but study it where it is not looked ill upon, and where my name need not be mixed up with it; and to make the best of matters, we will converse by letter, as before, as often or as seldom as we please; and so do ourselves all the good we can, and no injury." This, to be sure, was not the best of all possible arrangements; but has society arrived at those in any country? or have philosophers yet agreed what they are?

We have no doubt whatsoever, that one of the things which drove Lady Mary from England, was the enmity she caused all around her by the license of her tongue and pen. She was always writing scandal; a journal full of it, was burnt by her family; her very panegyrics were sometimes malicious, or were thought so, in consequence of her character, as in the instance of the extraordinary verses addressed to Mrs. Murray, in connexion with

a trial for a man's life. Pope himself, with all the temptations of his wit and resentment, would hardly have written of her as he did, had her reputation for offence been less a matter of notoriety.

The following are a few specimens of a tone common to her familiar letters:—

"I send this by Lady Lansdowne, who I hope will have no curiosity to open my letter."—ii. p. 123.

"The bearer of this epistle is our cousin, and a consummate puppy, as you will see at first sight."—ii. p. 139.

"Lady Rich" (a particular friend of hers) "is happy in dear Sir Robert's absence, and the polite Mr. Holt's return to his allegiance, who, though in a treaty of marriage with one of the prettiest girls in town (Lady J. Wharton), appears better with her than ever. Lady B. Manners is on the brink of matrimony with a Yorkshire Mr. Monckton, of 3000*l.* per annum: it is a match of the young duchess's making, and she thinks matter of great triumph over the two coquet beauties, who can get nobody to have and to hold; they are decayed to a piteous degree, and so neglected, that they are grown constant and particular to the two ugliest fellows in London. Mrs. Poulteney condescends to be publicly kept by the noble Earl of Cadogan; whether Mr. Poulteney has a pad nag deducted out of the profits for his share, I cannot tell; but he appears very well satisfied with it."—ii. p. 152.

"Mrs. West was with her (Mrs. Murray), who is a great prude, having but two lovers at a time: I think these are Lord Haddington and Mr. Lindsay; the one for use, the other for show."—ii. p. 159.

"Mrs. Murray has retrieved his Grace, and being reconciled to the temporal, has renounced the spiritual. Her friend Lady Hervey, by aiming too high, has fallen very low; and is reduced to trying to persuade folks she has an intrigue, and

gets nobody to believe her, the man in question taking a great deal of pains to clear himself of the scandal."—ii. p. 201.

Lady Hervey, who has a reputation with posterity very different from this, was once *her* friend, and was probably alienated by sallies of this description, if not by a correspondence of a tenderer sort with Lord Hervey; one of whose letters to Lady Mary, of a very familiar description, appears in Dallaway's Memoirs (vol. i. p. 46). Even to the last, with all the fine sense she had acquired, in addition to her unusual stock, and the better-heartedness which it helped to draw forth, she could not resist an opportunity of bantering a man to his face, scandalizing his wife, and giving an account of it to her daughter. In the year 1754, she writes thus to Lady Bute, from Louvre:—

"We have had many English here: Mr. Greville, his lady, and her suite of adorers, deserve particular mention; he was so good to present me with his curious book: since the days of the honourable Mr. Edward Howard, nothing has been ever published like it. I told him the age wanted an Earl of Dorset to celebrate it properly; and he was so well pleased with that speech, that he visited me every day, to the great comfort of madame, who was entertained, meanwhile, with parties of pleasure of another kind."—iii. p. 102.

It must be observed, however, in Lady Mary's defence, that this kind of talking was not peculiar to herself in that age, nor confined to what are called disreputable people, though she indulged in it more than others. In the *Correspondence of the Countess*

of Suffolk, published some years ago, are letters of lively maids of honour, and married ladies, quite as free spoken, in every respect, as some of hers; and here rises a curious reflection respecting the age itself, the benefit of which a reviewer is bound to give her. We allude to the secret understanding which appears to have existed, at least in the more educated circles,—that moral reputation, as it regarded the sexes, was to be very indulgently treated; and that people's virtues were not to be disputed, at least publicly, so long as they combined a free notion of them with decorum. We are not aware that Pope's gallantries were ever brought up against him, even by the most provoked of his enemies, except once by *Cibber*, and then good-humouredly, and in self-defence; and this was the more remarkable, inasmuch as Pope seemed to attack them in others; though he might have said he only did so under vulgar and offensive circumstances. At all events, he did not think himself disqualified by his own freedoms for writing moral essays, and constituting himself censor-general. Nor was his right to the title disputed on their account, publicly or privately. Martha Blount, though understood to be "a lady that was either privately married to him, or that should have been so," was visited by all his friends, female as well as male, and of the most decorous reputations. Steele, censor-general under the avowed and more modest apology of a feigned name, and arrogating, with his delicious nature, no

merit to himself but a zeal for the public good, and a life (as he phrased it) "at best but pardonable," is described by Johnson, in one of his happiest and best-humoured periods, as "the most agreeable rake that ever trod the rounds of indulgence."—

> "——— Garth, the best good Christian he,
> Although he knew it not,"

(so Pope described him) had a like reputation. Congreve was understood to be the *ciscisbeo* of Henrietta, Duchess of Marlborough, who indeed was ostentatious of the connexion. Of Prior nothing need be said; except that while others described him as one "who made himself beloved by every living thing in the house; master, child, servant, human creature, or animal," (see Lady Louisa's Anecdotes, p. 63) Pope told Spence, that he was "not a right good man;" adding, apparently as his reason for the censure, that besides often drinking hard (which Pope's "guide and philosopher," Bolingbroke, used to do), he would bury himself days and nights with "a poor mean creature." He adds, however, that he turned "violent Tory" from "strong Whig," and dropped his former friends. But at least a great part of his offence consisted in the low birth of his mistress, whom Pope again speaks of as having been a notorious "wretch," and "a poor little ale-house keeper's wife." Did Pope object anything to Congreve and a Duke's wife? We are not aware that anybody

ever reproached even Swift, personal as he was, with his own equivocal situation with regard to Miss Johnson and others. Neither did he, though a clergyman, see any disadvantage to his repute in being acquainted with the mistresses of other men, great or small, from Lady Orkney (King William's mistress), whom he pronounced "the wisest woman he ever knew," down to the author of the *New Atalantis*, the friend of Mr. Alderman Barber. As to Lady Mary, she was bred up among examples of gallantry, and family histories as full of them. One of her closest early friends was "dear Molly Skirrett," who had a child by Sir Horace Walpole, and afterwards became his second wife; and her husband's relations were not behindhand — Lady Sandwich flourishing in the middle of them; she was daughter of the famous Lord Rochester, and is described as possessing all her father's "fire." On the death of her husband, whom she is said to have kept in trammels like a child, and even confined to the house, this lady quitted England, "too stupid," she said, "for her," in order to reside at Paris; though the Duchess of Orleans, mother of the Regent, tells us in her *Memoirs*, that she gave such accounts of the "orgies" in the palace of *Queen Anne* that "she would not see her."

Lady Sandwich probably gave false accounts; but there is no question, that a great deal of license reigned in all the courts of England since the age of the Tudors up to that of George III.; and that

the upper circles (and we do not mean to say it offensively, or without a just sense of what causes it) have at all times been inclined to give themselves a liberty, proportionate to the temptations created by wealth, leisure, and refinement. The liberty only spoke more openly, or thought concealment less necessary, in the time of Lady Mary, because it was a time of peace and security, with no stirring on the part of the middle orders, except in the tranquil pursuits of commerce; though there was still enough affectation of the reverse (or a provoking and real amount of it) to make such spirits as hers the more angry and self-sufficient, between their indignation at the falsehood and perplexity at the contradiction. The case will continue to be so, and become the more obvious, in proportion to the growing lights and candour of society; nor can the philosopher conceal, that a time will come, when the question must be openly entertained, whether a little more candour, or less, will be the better for the interests of the community; whether the system producing all that intrigue, and lying, and heartlessness, and occasionally nine-tenths of the tragedies in books and real life; and the heart-harrowing sights daily and nightly visible in a metropolis, will be the better for retaining within itself the same mixture of inclination of truth and practice of duplicity—or for begging the whole world, with its sorrows, concealments, and contradictions, to speak aloud, and consider not what

is best to pretend, but best to do. An awful question! that will come, whether we will or no, and which those will be best prepared to meet, who have considered it in reverence for the mistakes and sorrows of all, and not in mere escape or repulsion of their own.

Lady Mary's life on the continent is described by her as having been passed among books and gardens, and the cultivation of intelligent society; and we have no doubt that the staple part of it was; but evidence escapes her pen of things more in unison with what was said by her enemies; and though we as little doubt that the enemies greatly exaggerated, we need not repeat our belief in their foundation. As to Horace Walpole, who talked of her as he did, partly because he hated her for loving his mother's successor (not his worst reason), and partly because he was as great and scandalous a tattler as anybody, there is something in the long, and frivolous, and fragile celibacy of his life, which in spite of his wit and good sense, or perhaps the more for it, gives a peculiarly revolting character to the perpetual squeak of his censoriousness. His disgusting portrait of Lady Mary in old age, painted with all the evil gusto and plastering of an angry nurse or procuress, is well known. Lady Mary may or may not have worn a mask at one time when she received visitors (her biographer, indeed, says she did), but she may have done it for no worse reason, in a woman of her sort, than to baffle curiosity,

as well as to screen the advances of age. If she was ashamed of showing her face on other accounts, she would hardly have received her visitors. She owns in one of her letters, that after a certain period, she would never again look in a glass. And yet Mrs. Montagu tells us, that on her return to England she still looked young! The following is Lady Louisa's account of that final event in her life:—

"She survived her return home too short a time to afford much more matter for anecdotes. Those who could remember her arrival, spoke with delight of the clearness, vivacity, and raciness of her conversation, and the youthful vigour which seemed to animate her mind. She did not appear displeased at the general curiosity to see her, nor void of curiosity herself concerning the new things and people that her native country presented to her view, after so long an absence: yet, had her life lasted half as many years as it did months, the probability is that she would have gone abroad again; for her habits had become completely foreign in all those little circumstances, the sum of which must constitute the comfort or discomfort of every passing day. She was accustomed to foreign servants, and to the spaciousness of a foreign dwelling. Her description of the harpsichord-shaped house she inhabited in one of the streets bordering upon Hanover Square, grew into a proverbial phrase: 'I am most handsomely lodged,' said she; 'I have two very decent closets, and a cupboard on each floor.' This served to laugh at, but could not be a pleasant exchange for the Italian palazzo. However, all earthly good and evil were very soon terminated by a fatal malady, the growth of which she had long concealed. The fatigues she underwent in her journey to England tended to exasperate its symptoms; it increased

rapidly, and before ten months were over, she died, in the seventy-third year of her age."—p. 94.

This malady, long concealed, was a cancer; her courage in enduring which, with a spirit so much the reverse of complaining, had been justly admired.

The following is the account before alluded to, of these last days of Lady Mary, given by Mrs. Montagu, who married her husband's cousin, Edward. She is writing to a friend at Naples:—

"You have lately returned us from Italy a very extraordinary personage, Lady Mary Wortley. When nature is at the trouble of making a very singular person, time does right in respecting it. Medals are preserved, when common coin is worn out; and as great geniuses are rather matters of curiosity than use, this lady seems to be reserved for a wonder to more than one generation. She does not look older than when she went abroad; has more than the vivacity of fifteen; and a memory, which perhaps is unique. Several people visited her out of curiosity, which she did not like. I visit her because her husband and mine were cousin-germans; and though she has not any foolish partiality for her husband and his relations, I was very graciously received, and you may imagine, entertained by one, who neither thinks, speaks, acts, or dresses, like anybody else. Her domestic establishment is made up of all nations: and when you get into her drawing-room, you imagine you are in the first story of the tower of Babel. An Hungarian servant takes your name at the door; he gives it to an Italian, who delivers it to a Frenchman; the Frenchman to a Swiss, and the Swiss to a Polander; so that by the time you get to her ladyship's presence, you have changed your name five times without the expense of an act of parliament."—(The passage is in her collected *letters*, but we get it from the *Censura Literaria* of Sir Egerton Brydges, vol. iii. p. 263.)

In a subsequent letter the same writer says:—

"Lady Mary W. Montagu returned to England, as it were, to finish where she began. I wish she had given us an account of the events that filled the space between. She had a terrible distemper, the most virulent cancer ever heard of, which soon carried her off. I met her at my Lady Bute's in June, and she then looked well; in three weeks after, at my return to London, I heard she was given over. The hemlock kept her drowsy and free from pain; and the physicians thought, if it had been given early, it might have saved her.

"She left her son one guinea. He is too much of a sage to be concerned about money, I presume. When I first knew him, a rake and a beau, I did not imagine he would addict himself at one time to Rabbinical learning, and then travel all over the east, the great itinerant savant of the world. One has read, that the great believers in the transmigration of souls suppose a man, who has been rapacious and cunning, does penance in the shape of a fox; another, cruel and bloody, enters the body of a wolf. But I believe my poor cousin in his pre-existent state, having broken all moral laws, has been sentenced to suffer in all the various characters of human life. He has run through them all successfully enough. His dispute with Mr. Needham has been communicated to me by a gentleman of the museum; and I think he will gain no laurels there. But he speaks as decisively as if he had been bred at Pharaoh's court, in all the learning of the Egyptians. He has certainly very uncommon parts; but too much of the rapidity of his mother's genius."—vol. ii. p. 284.

These "uncommon parts," and "rapidity of genius," in poor Wortley, junior, amounted to no more, we believe, than a constitutional vivacity derived from his mother, overlaid with his father's dulness, and terminating in a vain and unstable

flightiness of character, which pretended everything, and performed nothing. "Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel," is well quoted of him by Lady Louisa. He first plagued his parents by running away from school, and being everywhere but where he should have been,—going aboard ship—apprenticing himself to a trade, &c. In early manhood he led a rambling life, always telling falsehoods, and importuning them for money, which the father, who was very rich, had better have given him; and before he died, he realised a most remarkable prophecy of his mother's (see vol. ii. p. 325) by becoming, first a Catholic, and then a Mussulman, in which latter faith, with a turban and beard besides, and, it is said, a harem into the bargain, he died. He was at one time a Member of Parliament, and besides some dull communications to the Royal Society, published a book on the *Decline and Fall of the Ancient Republics*, the composition of which was afterwards claimed by the Rev. Mr. Forster, his tutor. In a word, he seemed to be the offspring of the perplexity of his father's and mother's first position,—the victim of their mistake, and privileged to obtain what excuses and comforts he could get from them, which, to do them justice, they upon the whole afforded, though not always with the right distribution of blame and allowance on all sides. His father, however, though not unkind, was not generous, especially (as we agree with a contemporary) for a man who left an enormous fortune; and Lady Mary

herself had an ultra-prudent sympathy with her husband on this head,—their only and sorry point of accord! But she had evidently suffered much as a parent. She would have shown her son the love she missed herself, could he have returned it. She did so to her daughter: and love, perhaps, would have made her generous. Her good sense was so exquisite, and often took so feeling a turn, that did we not meet with examples every day of the singular difference between the power to think rightly and the disposition to act so, we should fancy she wanted but some very little encouragement of true love on the part of a superior nature, to become all that could be desired. Here follow a few specimens of it:—

WELCOME FALSEHOODS.

"I am in perfect health; I hear it said that I look better than ever I did in my life, which is one of those lies one is always glad to hear."—ii. p. 183.

How true this is! and how it comes home to one!

A RESOURCE TO THE LAST.

"In general, I could not perceive but that the old were as well pleased as the young; and I, who dread growing wise more than anything in the world, was overjoyed that one can never outlive one's vanity."—Id. p. 191.

WAR AND IMPROVEMENT.

"The world is past its infancy, and will no longer be contented with spoon-meat. Time has added great improvements, but those very improvements have introduced a train of artificial necessities. A collective body of men make a gradual progress in understanding, like that of a single individual.

When I reflect on the vast increase of useful as well as speculative knowledge the last three hundred years has produced, and that the peasants of this age have more conveniences than the first emperors of Rome had any notion of, I imagine we are now arrived at that period which answers to fifteen. I cannot think we are older, when I recollect the many palpable follies which are still (almost) universally persisted in: I place that of war as senseless as the boxing of schoolboys; and whenever we come to man's estate (perhaps a thousand years hence) I do not doubt it will appear as ridiculous as the pranks of unlucky lads. Several discoveries will then be made, as several truths made clear, of which we have now no more idea than the ancients had of the circulation of the blood, or the optics of Sir Isaac Newton."—iii. p. 141.

Benedictæ sint eæ, quæ ante nos nostra dixerunt!

HOPE AND STRENGTH OF MIND.

"Everything may turn out better than you expect. We see so darkly into futurity we never know when we have real cause to rejoice or lament. The worst appearances have often happy consequences, as the best lead many times into the greatest misfortunes. Human prudence is very straitly bounded. What is most in our power, though little so, is the disposition of our own minds. Do not give way to melancholy; seek amusements; be willing to be diverted, and insensibly you will become so. Weak people only place a merit in affliction." —Id. p. 25.

PRETENDED CANDOUR.

"Vices are often hid under the name of virtues, and the practice of them followed by the worst of consequences. Sincerity, friendship, piety, disinterestedness, and generosity, are all great virtues; but, pursued with discretion, become criminal. I have seen ladies indulge their own ill-humour by being very rude and impertinent, and think they deserve approbation, by saying, I love to speak truth."—Id. p. 49.

A CAUTION.

"People are never so near playing the fool as when they think themselves wise."—Id. p. 111.

THE RIGHT SECOND CHILDHOOD.

"Age, when it does not harden the heart and sour the temper, naturally returns to the milky disposition of infancy. Time has the same effect on the mind as on the face. The predominant passion, the strongest feature, become more conspicuous from the others retiring; the various views of life are abandoned, from want of ability to preserve them, as the fine complexion is lost in wrinkles; but as surely as a large nose grows large, and a wide mouth wider, the tender child in your nursery will be a tender old woman, though, perhaps, reason may have restrained the appearance of it, till the mind, relaxed, is no longer capable of concealing its weakness."—Id. p. 143.

PARENT AND CHILD.

"I am so far persuaded of the goodness of your heart" (she is writing to her daughter) "I have often had a mind to write you a consolatory epistle on my own death, which I believe will be some affliction, though my life is wholly useless to you. That part of it which we passed together you have reason to remember with gratitude, though I think you misplace it; you are no more obliged to me for bringing you into the world, than I am to you for coming into it, and I never made use of that common-place (and, like most common-place, false) argument, as exacting any return of affection. There was a mutual necessity on us both to part at that time, and no obligation on either side. In the case of your infancy, there was so great a mixture of instinct, I can scarce even put that in the number of the proofs I have given you of my love; but I confess I think it a great one, if you compare my after conduct towards you with that of other mothers, who generally look on children as devoted to their pleasures, and bound by duty to have no sen-

timents but what they please to give them; playthings at first, and afterwards the objects on which they may exercise their spleen, tyranny, or ill-humour. I have always thought of you in a different manner. Your happiness was my first wish, and the pursuit of all my actions, divested of all selfish interest so far. I think you ought, and believe you do, remember me as your real friend."—Id. p. 389.

NOVEL READING.

"Daughter! daughter! don't call names; you are always abusing my pleasures, which is what no mortal will bear. Trash, lumber, sad stuff, are the titles you give to my favourite amusement. If I call a white staff a stick of wood, a gold key gilded brass, and the ensigns of illustrious orders coloured strings, this may be philosophically true, but would be very ill received. We have all our playthings; happy are those that can be contented with those they can obtain: those hours are spent in the wisest manner that can easiest shade the ills of life, and are the least productive of ill consequences. I think my time better employed in reading the adventures of imaginary people, than the Duchess of Marlborough, who passed the latter years of her life in paddling with her will, and contriving schemes of plaguing some, and extracting praises from others, to no purpose, eternally disappointed, and eternally fretting. The active scenes are over at my age. I indulge, with all the art I can, my taste for reading. If I would confine it to valuable books, they are almost as rare as valuable men. I must be content with what I can find. As I approach a second childhood, I endeavour to enter into the pleasures of it. Your youngest son is, perhaps, at this very moment riding on a poker with great delight, not at all regretting that it is not a gold one, and much less wishing it an Arabian horse, which he could not know how to manage. I am reading an idle tale, not expecting wit or truth in it, and am very glad that it is not metaphysics to puzzle my judgment, or history to mislead my opinion.

He fortifies his health with exercise; I calm my cares by oblivion. The methods may appear low to busy people; but, if he improves his strength, and I forget my infirmities, we both attain very desirable ends."—Id. p. 146.

And so farewell, poor, flourishing, disappointed, reconciled, wise, foolish, enchanting Lady Mary! Fair English vision in Turk-land; Turkish vision in ours; the female wit of the days of Pope; benefactress of the species; irritating satirist of the circles. Thou didst err for want of a little more heart,—perhaps for want of finding enough in others, or for loss of thy mother in infancy,—but thy loss was our gain, for it gained us thy books, and thy inoculation. Thy poems are little, being but a little wit in rhyme, *vers de société;* but thy prose is much,—admirable, better than acute, idiomatical, off-hand, conversational without inelegance, fresh as the laugh on the young cheek, and full of brain. The conventional shows of things could not deceive thee: pity was it that thou didst not see a little farther into the sweets of things unconventional,—of faith in the heart, as well as in the blood and good sense! Loveable, indeed, thou wert not, whatever thou mightst have been rendered; but admirable thou wert, and ever wilt thou be thought so, as long as pen writeth straightforward, and sense or Sultana hath a charm.

LIFE AND AFRICAN VISIT OF PEPYS.*

Characteristics of Autobiography. — Account of Pepys's "Diary," and summary of his life.—His voyage to Tangier, and business in that place.—Character and behaviour of its Governor, the "Infamous Colonel Kirke."—Pepys's return to England.—Gibbon's ancestor, the herald.—Pepys and Lord Sandwich, &c.

It is a good thing for the world, and a relief from those conventional hypocrisies of which most people are ashamed, even when they would be far more ashamed to break through them, that now and then there comes up some autobiographical gentleman who makes the universe his confidant, and carries the *nil humani alienum* down to a confession about his love of preferment, or a veal-pie, or his delight

* From the *Edinburgh Review* for 1841.—Occasioned by "The Life, Journal, and Correspondence of Samuel Pepys, Esq., Secretary to the Admiralty in the reigns of Charles II. and James II. Including a Narrative of his Voyage to Tangier, deciphered from the short-hand MSS. in the Bodleian Library." Now first published from the originals. 2 vols. 8vo. London: 1841.

in setting up his coach. We do not mean such only as have written "lives," but men of autobiographical propensities, in whatever shape indulged. Montaigne was such a man; Boswell was another; and we have a remarkable one in the Diarist before us, who, if he does not give us a whole life, puts into the memorandums of some ten or a dozen years more about himself than whole lives have communicated. The regular autobiographers are apt to be of loftier pretensions, and less fondly communicative; but still they make curious and sometimes extraordinary disclosures. At one time, the writer is a philosopher (Rousseau), who shakes the thrones of Europe, and has stolen a bit of riband; at another, a knight-errant out of season (Lord Herbert), who breaks the peace in order to preserve it, and thinks he has had a revelation against revelation. A still more summary Italian (Cellini), settles his differences with people by stabbing them; and as the contemporaries of such writers are sometimes almost as strange people as themselves, though not aware of it, this assassin, who made admirable goblets and wine-coolers, is pardoned by the Pope, because he is too great a genius to be hung.

All autobiographers indeed, the very frankest, have more or less their concealments; for it would require the utmost extreme of impudence or simplicity to tell everything. We never met with one of whom it was to be expected, unless it was that

great, but mad genius, Cardan, or the Quaker physician who favours us with his indigestions. One French lady (the heroical and unfortunate Madame Roland) may treat us as her tenderest friend, and startle us with a communication for which we cannot account; and another (Madame de Stahl—not de Stael) exhibit a charming truth and self-knowledge beyond all other autobiographers; and yet from neither do we expect to hear all that gave them surprise or mortification. Still, nevertheless, the beauty of all such writing is, that concealment itself becomes a species of disclosure. The moment a man begins speaking of himself, however prudently he thinks he is going to do it (and the remark of course does not apply the less to tongues more bewitching), a discerning reader may be pretty sure of seeing into the real nature of his character and proceedings. Who doubts the bad temper and impracticableness of Rousseau, for all his attempts to disguise it? or the mere self-seeking of Alfieri? or the pious frauds, and more excusable weaknesses, of Madame de Genlis? (to whom, nevertheless, we believe the world and the present generation to be greatly indebted). If the autobiography tells the truth, there is no mistaking it; and if it falsifies, even in a truth-like manner, we may detect the falsehood in the particularity of its recitals, or in its affectation of ease and simplicity, or in the general impression. The writer betrays himself when he least suspects it, and for that very reason; and he always exhibits his

greatest weakness when he flatters himself he is at the top of his strength, or even when he is so; for he is then not only least on his guard, but has reached the limits of his understanding; and by his scorn and his final judgments, he discloses to us the whole field of his ignorance beyond it.

As the perusal of autobiography, however, puts the reader in the state of a companion, it is far pleasantest, upon the whole, when it saves him the unsocial and hostile trouble of such detections; and, like our old friend before us, is as truly candid about himself as others—thoroughly open, unsuspecting, and familiar—"pouring out all as plain" as "old Montaigne" aforesaid, or "downright Shippen."

Let such a man tell us what he will—supposing he is not a dolt, or out of his wits—we cannot help having, not only a portion of regard, but something of a respect for him, seeing his total freedom from the most injurious and alienating of vices, insincerity; and, accordingly—though we laugh at Pepys with his cockney revels, and his beatitudes of lace and velvet, and his delight at having his head patted by Lord Clarendon, and his honest uproariousness, and his not knowing "what to think," between his transport with the court beauties, and the harm he is afraid they will do the state—we feel that he ends in being a thoroughly honest man, and even a very clever one, and that we could have grown serious in his behalf, had his comfort or good name been put in jeopardy.

Till within these few years, indeed, our old friend's name, as far as it was remembered, was altogether of a serious and respectful description. There survived—in corners of the "Gentleman's Magazine;" of naval antiquarian minds, and other such literary and official quarters—a staid and somewhat solemn notion of a certain Samuel Pepys, Esq., a patronizing gentleman and Admiralty patriot, who condescended to amuse his leisure with collecting curious books and old English ballads, and was the founder of the Pepysian library at Cambridge. Percy recorded him in his "Reliques;" Cole and Nichols honoured him; Granger eulogised him; biographers of admirals trumpeted him; Jeremy Collier, in the Supplement to his Dictionary, pronounced him a philosopher of the "severest morality;" and though the "severest morality" was a bold saying, a great deal of the merit attributed to him by these writers was true.

But, in the classical shelves of Maudlin, not far from the story of Midas's barber and his reeds, there lay, ready to burst its cerements—a "Diary!" The ghosts of the chambermaids of those days archly held their fingers upon their lips as they watched it. The great spirit of Clarendon felt a twinge of the conscience to think of it. The ancestors of Lord Braybroke and Mr. Upcott were preparing the existence of those gentlemen, on purpose to edit it. And edited it was; and the "staid and solemn," the respectable, but jovial Pepys, welcomed, with shouts

of good fellowship, to the laughing acquaintance of the world.

Every curious passage in that extraordinary publication, came on the reader with double effect, from an intimation given by the editor that it had been found "absolutely necessary" to make numerous curtailments. He hung out no "lights," as Madame Dacier calls them. There were no stars, or other typographical symbols, indicating the passages omitted. The reader therefore concluded, that, rich in suggestion as the publication was, it had "riches fineless" concealed. Every court anecdote was thought to contain still more than it told; and every female acquaintance of the poor author, unless he expressly said the contrary, was supposed to be no better than she should be. We seemed on the borders of hearing, every instant, that all the maids of honour had sent for the doctor on one and the same evening; or that the court had had a ball in their nightgowns; or that the beds there had been half burnt (for Lady Castlemaine once threatened to fire Whitehall); or, lastly, that Mr. Pepys himself had been taken to the roundhouse in the dress of a tirewoman, with his wife's maid by his side as a boy from sea. The suppressed passages were naturally talked about in bookselling and editorial quarters, and now and then a story transpired. The following conclusion of one of them has been much admired, as indicating the serious reflections which Pepys mixed up with his levities, and the strong

sense he entertained of the merits of an absent wife. We cannot say what was the precise occasion, but it was evidently one in which he had carried his merry-meetings to an unusual extent—probably to the disarrangement of all the lady's household economy; for he concludes an account of some pastime in which he had partaken, by a devout expression of penitence, in which he begs pardon of "God and Mrs. Pepys."

Welcome, therefore, anything new, however small it may be, from the pen of Samuel Pepys—the most confiding of diarists, the most harmless of turn-coats, the most wondering of *quidnuncs*, the fondest and most penitential of faithless husbands, the most admiring, yet grieving, of the beholders of the ladies of Charles II., the Sancho Panza of the most insipid of Quixotes, James II., who did bestow on him (in naval matters) the government of a certain "island," which, to say the truth, he administered to the surprise and edification of all who bantered him! Strange was it, assuredly, that for a space of ten years, and stopped only by a defect of eyesight, our Admiralty clerk had the spirit—after the labours, and the jests, and the news-tellings, and the eatings and drinkings, and the gallantries of each day—to write his voluminous diary every night before he went to bed, not seldom after midnight. And hardly less strange was it, nay stranger, that considering what he disclosed, both respecting himself and others, he ran, in the first place, the perpetual risk

of its transpiration, especially in those searching times; and, in the second, bequeathed it to the reverend keeper of a college, to be dug up at any future day, to the wonder, the amusement, and not very probable respect, of the coming generations.

Three things have struck us in going through the old volumes again, before we digested the new ones; first, what a truly hard-working, and, latterly, thoroughly conscientious man our hero was, in spite of all his playgoings and his courtliness; second, what multitudes of "respectable" men might write just such a diary if they had but one virtue more, in addition to the virtues they exhibit and the faults they secrete; and, third (for it is impossible to be serious any long time together when considering Pepys), what curious little circumstances conspired to give a look even of fabulous and novel-like interest to his adventures — not excepting the characteristical names of many of his acquaintances good as those in the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, or the pages of Fielding and Smollett. Thus we have "Muddiman the arch rogue," and "Pin the tailor," and "Tripp, who dances well," and Truelock the gunsmith, and Drumbleby the pipemaker who makes flageolets "to go low and soft," and Mr. Talents the chaplain, and Mr. Gold the merchant, and Surgeon Pierce, and "that jade" Mrs. Knipp the actress, and "Cousin Gumbleton" the "good-humoured, fat young gentleman," and Creed, who prepares himself for the return of the old religion. Considering what sort of

man Pepys was, especially at the time of his intimacy with these people, it would not be difficult to fancy Tripp, and Knipp, and Pierce, and Pin (unless indeed the tailor had too reverent a sense of his "orders,") plotting to mystify him with a night-revel, as the fairies did Falstaff, and startling his fleshly conscience with retributive pinches. His own name, pronounced as it was in those days, is not the least amusing of these coincidences. It was singularly appropriate. The modern pronunciation, we believe, is Pepps—with a variation of Peppis. His contemporaries called him *Peeps!**

We cannot avoid adding, that one of his grand-uncles had the very ludicrous, and what, with reference to the aspirations of the nephew, might be called the highly *avuncular* name of "*Apollo* Pepys!" But perhaps it was the scriptural name Apollos; for one of the three sisters of this gentleman was named Faith, and another Paulina.

We must suppress, however, the temptation of dwelling upon the former publication too long, and still more that of repeating some provoking passages which appeared in the notice of it in this Journal (vol. xliii. p. 23). It may be as well, nevertheless, in speaking of the new volumes, and by way of keeping before us an entire impression of the man, while closing our accounts with him, to devote a few

* "On Tuesday last Mr. Peeps went to Windsor, having the confidence that he might kiss the king's hand."—*Memoirs*, Appendix, vol. ii. p. 302.

sentences to the briefest possible summary of the events of his life. He was born in 1632, of a highly respectable family, the eldest branch of which has become ennobled in the person of the admirable lawyer, who lately obtained the esteem of all parties in his discharge of the office of Lord Chancellor. His father, however, being the youngest son of the youngest brother of a numerous race, was bred a tailor (the supposed origin of our hero's beatific notion of a suit of clothes); yet Samuel received a good education, first at St. Paul's School, and then at Cambridge. At twenty-three, he married a girl of fifteen. He appears to have been a trooper (probably a city volunteer) under the commonwealth; gradually quitted that side in concert with his cousin and protector, Sir Edward Montagu, afterwards Earl of Sandwich; found himself aboard the English fleet with him one fine morning, going to Holland, to fetch home the royal family; nearly knocked out his own right eye, in helping to fire a salute; put on his new silk suit, July the 10th, and his black camlet cloak with silver buttons, July the 13th; obtained a place in the Admiralty, from which he rose higher and higher, till he did almost the whole real business in that quarter during the reigns of Charles and James; was sent to Tangier when that possession was destroyed, to advise with the commander of the squadron, and estimate the compensations to the householders; was arrested on a preposterous charge of treason, on the change in

the government; retired, childless and a widower, to the house of a protégé at Clapham, full of those luxuries of books and *vertù* which he had always patronized; and died there of the consequences of luxurious and sedentary living, though at a good age, on the 26th of May, 1703. He was for many years in Parliament (we wish he was there now, taking notes of his own party); was fond of dining, play-going, fine clothes, fair ladies, practical jokes, old ballads, books of science, executions, and coaches; composed music, and played on the flageolet; was a Fellow, nay President, of the Royal Society (one reason, perhaps, in conjunction with his original Puritanism, why he could never take heartily to the author of Hudibras); and last, not least, was Master of the Worshipful Company of Clothworkers; to whom he presented "a richly-chased silver-loving cup," which his noble editor informs us is still constantly used at "all their public festivals;" doubtless with no mean justice to the memory of the draughts he took out of it. If we picture to ourselves Pepys practising his song of "Beauty retire" the first thing in the morning; then breakfasting and going to his duties, working hard at them, fretting at corruptions, yet once and away helping to patch up one himself; then taking a turn in the Park, to see and be seen in his new camlet; loving the very impudence of Lady Castlemaine, yet shaking his head about her; talking with some gossip of the last doings at court; cheapening

an old book on a stall, or giving his money away; then dining and going to the theatre, or to the house of some jovial friend, and playing "High Jinks" till supper; then supping considerably, and again going to work, perhaps till one or two in the morning; and, finally, saying his prayers, and thinking his wife positively half as pretty as Miss Mercer, or my lady herself,—if we take, we say, a dioramic view of him after this fashion, by way of specimen of his waking hours, we shall have a tolerably accurate sample of the stuff his life was made of during its best period, and till infirmity and his public consequence rendered him more thoughtful and dignified. The true entire man (to make a grand simile for our old acquaintance) is like the neighbouring planet, to be estimated neither when he waxes nor wanes, but when he is in mid career or the full development of his faculties, and shows his whole honest face to the world.

The two volumes before us, we are sorry to say, are not to be compared for a moment with those which have amused us with these recollections. We have seldom, in fact, met with a more disappointing publication. The editorship, it is true, as far as it goes, is of a much higher order than what the public have lately been accustomed to see. We believe it was in the hands of the late estimable Mr. John Towell Rutt. But, for reasons which the bookseller has left unexplained, the publication has been very crudely and strangely managed. Thus, it com-

mences with the omission of thirty-six pages, apparently of preface: the "Life" (so called, as if it were an entire life) occupies little more than twenty pages, and leaves off in its hero's prime, where the "Correspondence" begins; and the whole "Life, Journals, and Correspondence," which was thus comprehensively advertised, as though it contained all that had been published under such titles, consists but of this morsel of memoir, a good set of explanatory notes, the Journal at Tangier (forty pages), a Journal in Spain (seventeen pages), the Journal of the Voyage home (ten pages), and the gleanings of those fields of manuscript which had been so plentifully reaped by the editor of the "Memoirs" *par excellence.* In the new volumes, Pepys, considered as a humorist and an original, is altogether in his decline. He is older, more learned, perhaps more respectable—certainly duller; and the Tangier Diary will no more do to be compared with the old one, than a rainy day in autumn with a merry summer. However, as there is really some curious matter, and as traits of him still break out, the book is not unworthy of notice. A letter in the first volume clears up a question respecting a posthumous work of Milton; and the Journal at Tangier contains some highly characteristic accounts of an adventurer, who afterwards obtained an infamous reputation in the service of James the Second. A new head of Pepys, as if to suit the graver reputation of his advancing life, sup-

plies a frontispiece from the portrait belonging to the Royal Society. It is seemingly a likeness; but not at all the festive-looking good fellow in the morning gown, who invited us, like a host, to "fall to" upon our good fare in the quartos. Years and the Royal Society have taught him reserve and dignity. He does not wear so rakish a wig; nor is his face half-snoozing and half-chuckling with the recollections of last night's snap-dragon and blindman's-buff. His eye looks as if it knew what belonged to a man of his condition; his whole countenance is a challenge to scrutiny. It seems to say, "I am not at all the man I was, and you are not to expect it. I shall commit myself no further. I have not merely 'two cloaks' now about me, and 'everything that is handsome;' I have thoughts and dignities—and am a personage not to be looked at in a spirit of lightness. My companions are no longer Tripp and Knipp, but Fellows of the Royal Society, and the great Dr. Wallis." Probably—though we hope not (for the jollier picture would make the better jest)—it is the likeness to which his protégé Mr. Hill refers (vol. i. p. 162), when he declares, that "its posture is so stately and magnificent, and it hits so naturally his proportion and *the noble air of his face*, that he remains immoveable before it *hours together*."

The Barbary port of Tangier seems to have been destined to exhibit our countrymen in foolish and

failing lights. Addison's father, who was at one time chaplain to the garrison there, translated a silly account of it from the Spanish, in which the most ridiculous reports of Mandeville are repeated —about men whose feet served them for umbrellas, and people with dogs' and horses' heads, and no heads at all. The gallant and eccentric Lord Peterborough, during his voyage thither when a youth at sea, got into an unseemly squabble with the chaplain of his ship, in whose stead, one Sunday morning, he wanted to preach the sermon! And Sheffield, Duke of Buckinghamshire, then Lord Mulgrave, when he went there to fight the Moors for Charles the Second, was sent by the king in a leaky vessel — on purpose, according to the Tory writers, to drown him! His Majesty was angry at his having made love to the Princess Anne. Sir Walter Scott pronounces the attempt "ungenerous," and thinks that Mulgrave had "no small reason" to complain. We strongly agree with the negative tenderness of the great novelist's objections; and rather wonder what he would have said of the business, had the king been William instead of Charles. Again, Tangier, as is well known, had been a Portuguese possession, and was part of the dowry of poor Catharine of Braganza. Charles (owing to his profligate expenditure) and his brother James (in pursuit of designs formidable at that time of day) managed it very badly between them, and made it a place for jobs; the nation, after granting vast sums of money to render the fortifications next to indestructible, be-

came disgusted, and urged its abandonment; and at length Charles—who wanted the money that would have been further necessary to maintain it, in order to throw it away on his pleasures, and who was not sorry to have its garrison back in England to help him to reign without parliaments—despatched the Earl of Dartmouth to see to the work of its demolition. Pepys, who had long been on the Tangier Committee, went with Dartmouth for the purpose before mentioned, and was accompanied by Dr., afterwards the celebrated Sir William, Trumbull, as Joint Commissioner and Judge Advocate. These two gentlemen, exasperated by undomestic discomforts, official jealousies, and the unpleasant and not very profitable nature of the task, did not comfortably assort. Trumbull, who was anxious to get back—and did so as quickly as possible—said he had been beguiled into the business by false representations; while Pepys, not very consistently with some of his notices of the Doctor, complains that he (Pepys) did all the work, and taxes the other with avarice and want of courage. The future bold ambassador at the French court, and elegant friend of Dryden and Pope, certainly cuts a figure in the journal of our bustling friend, which does not tally with the usual estimate of his character, but accidental differences, especially if they touch upon self-love, may create the most angry prejudices between people otherwise not unsuited to each other; and if Trumbull had written a Diary of his own, and Pepys had seen it,

the latter, for more reasons than one, might have thought fit to moderate his objections.

There are frequent mentions of Tangier in the Great Diary. Before quoting the Journal, we will extract a passage or two, by way of preface, and to show how business was transacted in those days.

"12th January 1663.—I found my lord [Sandwich] within, and he and I went through the garden towards the duke's chamber, to sit upon the Tangier matters; but a lady called to my lord out of my Lady Castlemaine's lodging, telling him that the king was there, and would speak with him. My lord could not tell what to say at the committee to excuse his absence, but that he was with the king; nor would suffer me to go into the privy garden (which is now a thorough-passage and common), but bid me to go through some other way, which I did; so that I see he is a servant of the king's pleasures too, as well as business."

"19th.—To my Lord Chancellor's, where the king was to meet my Lord Treasurer and many great men, to settle the revenue of Tangier. I staid talking a while there; but the king not coming, I walked to my brother's."

"19th May 1664.—To a Committee of Tangier, where, God forgive me, how our report of my Lord Peterborough's accounts was read over and agreed to by the Lords, *without one of them understanding it!*"

"5th May 1667.—I walked over the park to Sir W. Coventry's. We talked of Tangier, of which he is ashamed; also that it should put the king [!] to this charge for no good in the world; and now a man going over that is a good soldier, but a debauched man, which the place need not to have. And so used these words:—'That this place was to the king, *as my Lord Carnarvon says of wood*, that it is *an excrescence of the earth, provided by God for the payment of debts.*'"

Here we may see, that the high tone of indifference to the people did not originate in the present times. Corn was defined, no doubt, in the same terms; and God as piously brought in to bear witness to their precision. The worst French revolutionists, who were just of a piece with these great Tory lords—counterparts of their pious determination to do what they liked with their timber, and to cut off heads as others "grind faces"—held, of course, the opinion, that wood was provided by God to make guillotines.

"15th May 1668.—To a Committee for Tangier, where, God knows how, my Lord Bellassis' accounts passed, understood by nobody but my Lord Ashley, who, I believe, was allowed to let them go as he pleased."

"22nd March 1669.—At it till noon (the Tangier and other business), here being several of my brethren with me, but doing nothing, but I all."

Pepys was in his fifty-first year when he went on his voyage to this place; yet the cut of his waistcoat still had a corner reserved for it in his memoranda. He seems even to have kept the vessel waiting at Plymouth while it was in the tailor's hands.

"24th, Friday, August 1683.—Stayed for my doublet; the sleeves altered according to sea fashion."

Being queasy and uncomfortable however, and always patriotic, he is very angry that anybody else should be dilatory; and complains of the "shameful want of discipline" in the other vessels, which were

"not ready to come out of Plymouth with their flags after my lord's signals."

"So," continues he, "with a fair wind from Plymouth, we were fain to lie by for them, losing our way all the while. Hamilton in the Dragon, and Wheeler in the Tiger, *though shot at from my lord*, not being under sail to come out to the last."

And then follows one of the numerous passages in the *real* history of that time, which show how its only virtue, as it has been called—its naval—has been overrated. It is frightful to see in our author's Diary, of what a mass of corruption, with the exception of a very few individuals, the whole administration of the navy consisted; and how the leaders, both on sea and shore, bandied against one another the foulest charges of knavery, and even cowardice. We certainly do not take their mutual testimonies for granted, nor believe that "cowards" in British vessels were at any time more than very rare phenomena; neither do we doubt that great fops, and very effeminate people in other respects, may be truly brave, any more than that the bravest men—nay, whole crews of them—may be liable at times to their misgivings, or even their panics, when they do not very clearly see the way before them. But a court positively dissolute is assuredly not the best nursery for the kind of valour required at sea, where fortitude is as necessary as audacity, and glory seldom to be won by sudden incursions out of comfortable head-quarters. It was the psalm-

singing old seamen of the Commonwealth that first maintained the national honour during the reign of Charles the Second; and it was the shame of being outdone by it—as well, no doubt, as the general spirit of bravery, in spite of corruption—that kept it up in the persons of the young officers and court rakes who were set over their grizzled heads. James the Second, it must be allowed, while Duke of York, is not to be denied the honour of a real anxiety for the welfare of the naval service; but even he, according to his friend Pepys, had great moral defects; and the best part of the skill and industry attributed to him, is due to Pepys himself. It must never, indeed, be forgotten, that there was a right honest feeling in Pepys, which was constantly at work for the good of the nation; and our navy, such as it is at this moment, owes, perhaps, a good half of its greatness to a couple of easy companions and lovers of old books—one of whom (Evelyn) may be said to have grown the timber to make its ships, while the other ensured strength and order to the crews that were to man them.

Yet our patriot will never let us be grave with him ten minutes together. Readers of our former article,* or of the Diary itself, may remember the puzzle he was in about "Hudibras," whether to think it witty or otherwise; how he bought it, and sold it, and bought it again, and tried to "find out" the wit, and then wondered any man could quote it. He

* (*Id est*, the review's, not the particular writer's.)

has by this time become a solid student in Butler, and speaks of reading "two books" of it, as others do of Homer or Virgil. It seems even to have been a resource to him in misfortune.

"29th, Wednesday.—Read the two first books of Hudibras. Dr. Trumbull being out of humour, we had no merry chat these two nights."

On arriving at Tangier, he says—

"On shore with my lord the first time; all the ships and the town firing guns. Met, and conducted in great state to the castle. After dinner see the ladies, mightily changed (we suppose, from what they were when they came on board). The place an ordinary place, overseen by the Moors. Amazed to think how the king hath laid out all this money upon it. Good grapes and pomegranates from Spain. *At night, infinitely bit with chinchees* (mosquitoes.)"

"18th, Tuesday.—Mightily out of order with being bit last night in the face," &c.

"19th, Wednesday.—I this day put on my first stuff suit, and left off socks, after many years."

"21st, Friday. Merry at supper with wine in saltpetre. Spanish onions mighty good."

"23rd, Sunday.—Shaved myself the first time since coming from England. . . . To church; where the parson of the parish preached. Here I first observed, outside the church, lizards sticking on the windows, to bask in the sun. At noon we had a great locust left on our table. This morning, in my chamber, was the most extraordinary spider I ever saw, at least ten times as big as an ordinary spider. With such things this country mightily abounds. *But above all that was most remarkable here,* I met the *governor's lady* in the pew; a lady I have long remarked for her beauty; but she is mightily altered,

and they tell stories on her part, while her husband minds pleasures of the same kind on his. After sermon, I led her down to her chair."

"25th, Tuesday.—Up betimes, being uneasy with the chinchees."

"11th October, Thursday.—Up betimes to walk, particularly on the stages at the stockade. I ventured within, a little way, to see a boat making by the Moors, and some of our carpenters lent them. I would not venture too near; for I had been a good prize, and I see their sentries mighty close intent upon me."

"12th, Friday.—First lay in drawers; and with that, and pinning my sleeves close, I was not to-night troubled with chinchees."

"17th, Wednesday.—W. Hewer tells me of captains submitting to the meanest servility to Herbert when at Tangier, waiting his rising and going to bed, combing his periwig, putting on his coat, as the king is served, &c.; he living and keeping a house on shore, and his mistresses *visited and attended, one after another, as the king's are.* For commanders that value themselves above tarpaulins to attend to these mean things, as Wheeler is particularly said to do!"

The governor whom Pepys found at Tangier was a personage qualified to excite all the astonishment, indignation, and disgust, of which his patriotic soul was susceptible;—no less than the infamous Colonel Kirke, the detestable instrument of Jacobite cruelty in the west of England. Burnet attributed Kirke's ferocity to the neighbourhood of the Moors at this place; but villains of his sort are not thus suddenly made; to say nothing of the doubtful Christian good-nature of thrusting off the vices of one's coun-

trymen upon a poor set of Mahometans. Kirke must have been a man of a hard unfeeling nature from the first, and of a will aggravated by bad education. Pepys found him carrying out his natural principles in the highest style within the walls of Tangier; quite apart from anything which the Moors could do to spoil such an innocent. Brute force was his law, and contempt of the many his gospel. The worst vices of Toryism, before or since, met in his person. He was as overbearing as an apostate; as disloyal, whenever it suited him, as any *quondam* preacher of loyalty; rapacious and monopolizing as the most selfish of the taxers of bread. He had a court about him at Tangier, which, in corruption, drinking, and profligacy, imitated, on a smaller and worse scale (if that were possible), the reckless one at home; and though he was far better fitted to spoil the Moors than they him, it is not impossible that, in the heat and tyranny of his African government, he first got his hand thoroughly into that system of terror, which he afterwards worked with such infamy on his native soil. The horrible story of him, which Pomfret put into verse, is now disbelieved, though probably there was foundation of *some* sort, even for that. He was a man drunk (besides his wine) with a long run of disorderly and bullying success; and he had no shame to limit his will, and no imagination to conceive the feelings of others, except as giving it pungency. It is not easy, therefore, under such circumstances, to deter-

mine the bounds of any sort, at which a fool without a heart would stop.

Pepys's accounts of this fellow form the most curious portions of the present work, and show what sort of a man James must have knowingly selected for his instrument;—our voyager being deeply in the royal confidence, and in the habit of communicating to him whatever he saw. Imagine this unfortunate, but heartless and senseless prince, having the following narratives given him by Pepys the next year, when the latter returned to England, and then, the year after, employing the wretch against his own people. Almost all the instances, to be sure, are mild and small, compared with the things he did afterwards; but we see the miscreant in preparation.

"23rd October, Tuesday.—While walking this morning up and down the mole and town, with my lord and the Governor, Roberts the town apothecary came to Kirke, and told him of bad wine now selling to soldiers at three-pence or three-halfpence a quart, so sour that it would kill the men. Kirke moved my lord, and he yielded, that it should be staved. Of his own accord, Kirke went to see it done—presently came to us again, and brought in his hand a bottle of white wine, calling it vinegar, and gave it my lord to taste, as also I and others did. I was troubled to see the owner, Mr. Cranborow, a modest man that kept a house of entertainment, come silently, with tears in his eyes, begging my lord to excuse it—for the wine was good wine, and sold so cheap only to get something for it, he not knowing how to send it away—and therefore desired he might not be undone. Kirke, in sight of my lord, all the while ranted, and called him dog; and that all

the merchants in the town were rogues like him, that would poison the men. My lord calmly bade the man dispose otherwise of what he had, and not sell it to the soldiers. "Nay," says Kirke, "he must then gather it up from the ground, for I have staved it!" The man (whether he had any not staved, I know not) withdrew weeping, and without any complaint, to the making my heart ache. Captain Pursell told me, he knew very well the wine Kirke staved, and stood on the man's chest in the cellar, when the wine about the room was too high for him to stand on the ground. The wine was better than my lord hath on his table, or did give him and the rest of the officers the other day when he entertained them."

* * * * * *

"This morning Dr. Lawrence told me his own case with the Governor, which shows Kirke a very brute. Sheres, also, to-day called me aside on the mole, to tell me that Kirke owes 1500*l.* among the inhabitants of the town, who can get no money from him, but curses, and "Why do you trust me?" Nor dare they complain, for fear of his employing some one or other to do them mischief, as, Sheres says, he hath done to two men that have been killed, as generally believed, by his orders. He caused a sergeant to be tied to a post, then beaten by himself as long as he could do it, then by another, and all for bidding a servant of his go to his mistress, Mrs. Collier.

"To show how little he makes of drunkenness (though he will beat a fellow for having a dirty face or band), I have seen, as he has been walking with me in the street, a soldier reel on him as drunk as a dog, at this busy time too, when everybody not on guard is at work. He hath only laughed at him, and cried, "The fellow hath got a good morning's draught already!" and so let him go without one word of reprehension. My lord does also tell me of nine hundred false musters (that, I think, was the number) in two thousand seven hundred men. This I will inquire after more certainly.

"At supper, Dr. Ken told my lord and the company, (Mr.

Hughes, minister of the parish being by), how Kirke hath put one Roberts on the parish to be reader, who will swear, drink, &c., as freely as any man in the town."

* * * * * * *

"Du Pas tells me of Kirke's having banished the Jews, without, or rather contrary to, express orders from England, only because of their denying him, or standing in the way of, his private profits. He made a poor Jew and his wife, that came out of Spain to avoid the Inquisition, be carried back, swearing they should be burned; and they were carried into the Inquisition and burned. He says, that he hath certainly been told that Kirke used to receive money on both sides, in cases of difference in law, and he that gave most should carry the cause. When the Recorder hath sometimes told him such and such a thing was not according to the laws of England, he hath said openly in court, 'But it was then according to the law of Tangier.'"

* * * * * * *

"Mr. Sheres desires my speaking to my lord, without naming my author, that a Tuniseen hath brought a prize into this port, the profit of buying which (contrary, however, to the express order of the king and lords, for governors to have nothing to do with trade) my lord hath given to Kirke, though solicited, as he told me, by several others to give them the buying it; whereas, indeed, he should have left the master to sell to whom he would. The Tuniseen demands fifteen hundred dollars—Kirke offers six hundred, and will neither give him more nor let him go away. The poor Tuniseen complains that he is ready to starve, having had nothing this week but bread and water."

* * * * * * *

"On Kirke's misgovernment, Captain Silver told my lord, in my hearing, that a company of the king's subjects were in chains, and how long the chains were, when my lord came hither, and commanded them to be set at liberty; and that this

tyrannical severity of Kirke's made so many desert the place and run to the Moors. He says, there hath been thirty or forty in those chains at a time. Silver hath got me, from the marshal of the town, who hath a great many of them, one of the very chains that the king's soldiers used to carry, and be made to work in."

* * * * * * *

"Kirke turned everything to his own benefit, nothing being sold in town but by him, or his licence, and with profit to him —he buying all the cattle of the Moors at nine pieces a head, and selling them to the butchers at twelve, ready money, they selling them to the people as dear as they could: this also, in the case of wax, against an express order in council, given, as they tell us, within a year."

After reading of brutalities like these, the laugh occasioned by the absurdities of such a man as Pepys, is salutary to our common nature. Among the deficiencies which, during his residence at Tangier, he discovers in the navy, is the want of a prayer, not only for a good wind, but for *some* wind! He grieves that clergymen show no eagerness to go to sea for the purpose of remedying these things; and wonders that, undesirous as they perhaps might be supposed to be of a fresh breeze, they do not at least look to the getting up of a little air, west by north, and so to the prevention of calms.

"Our want of a prayer *for a good wind* does enough show how little our churchmen make it their business to go to sea; which may serve also to improve the description of the dangers and illness of a sea life; whereas they ought, the first, to look after the wonders," &c. "Here comes in the story of Harman's chaplain, asking what he should do to be *saved*."

"We not only lack prayers at sea for a good wind, and what is yet as reasonable, thanks when we get it, witness our own case, but for *some* wind. In calms we not only suffer the evils that may attend not going forward to our port, but by ships being liable to be jogged together by the swell of the sea, without any power to resist it, they being ordinarily in a calm carried one upon another, the heads and tails lying divers ways, *like things distracted.*"

"26th, Friday.—Being a little ill, and troubled at so much loose company at table (my lord not being there), I dined in my chamber; and Dr. Ken (the chaplain, afterwards the famous bishop of Bath and Wells) came and dined with me. We had a great deal of good discourse on the viciousness of this place, *and its being time for Almighty God to destroy it!*"

"26th November, Monday.—Mightily frightened with my old swimming in the head at rising, and most of the morning, which makes me melancholy; I fear also my right foot being lame. But I hope in God both will go over, and that it is only the weather."

"28th, Wednesday.—This day, *to clear my head of matters*, I wrote many letters to friends in England; among others, *a merry, roguish, yet mysterious one to S. H.*"

In the beginning of the following March, the commission returned to England. Pepys, meantime, had paid a visit to Spain; but the twenty pages of Journal written there, tell us nothing about the country; and the ten pages of Journal at sea are of as little importance about the voyage. We therefore proceed to the "Correspondence" which, for the greatest part, is of a like value. But there are some curious passages, and the Editor has not been idle in increasing their relish from other sources. A

letter to the Duke of York, as Lord High Admiral, has an extract appended to it from the Harleian manuscripts, in which Pepys writes thus to a parliamentary commission:—

"Let me add, that in my endeavour after a full performance of my duty, I have neither made distinction of days between those of rest and others, nor of hours between day and night, *being less acquainted, during the whole war, with the closing my day's work before midnight, than after it.* And that your lordships may not conceive this to arise from any vain assumption of what may be grounded more upon the inability of others to disprove, than my own capacity to justify, such have ever been my apprehensions both of the duty and importance of my just attendance on his majesty's service, that among the many thousands under whose observation my employment must have placed me, *I challenge any man to assign one day from my first admission to this service in July* 1660, *to the determination of the war, August* 1667 (*being a complete apprenticeship*), *of which I am not, at this day, able upon oath to give an account of my particular manner of employing the same.*"—Vol. i. p. 125.

Here he alludes to the famous Journal. Suppose that one of Pepys's enemies (and he had them), had taken him at his word, and called for it! Suppose his friend, Dr. Wallis, called on to decipher it; and the memoranda, one after another, disclosing themselves, to the delight or terror of the committee! Suppose,—besides the tailorings, and the turkey-pies, and the gallantries, and the roaring suppers, with "faces smutted like devils," and Miss Mercer dancing a jig in boy's clothes,—their ears all opened

wide to the information, that Monk was a "thick-skulled fool," his duchess a "dirty drab," Lady Castlemain "abominable," divers of the commissioners themselves "ninnies" and corruptionists, and Clarendon not exempt from the latter charge, nor the Duke himself; he, and the King his brother, and all the court, "debauched and mad," the Duke and King getting "maudlin drunk," the King a silly speaker, the flatteries of him "beastly," and Cromwell remembered more and more with respect! Charles Lamb—in one of those humours of tragical fancy with which he refreshed his ultra-humanity—expresses a regret that Guy Fawkes did not *succeed* in blowing up the House of Lords, the sensation was such a loss to history! The reading of Pepys's Journal would have been a blowing-up of the court, hardly less tremendous; only we fear that the poor journalist would have gone up alone in his glory. The court would have contrived to quash the business in silence and rage.

Our busy, curious, not always consistent, but always well-meaning and good-natured secretary, was acquainted with a great number of people—many of whom he assisted, and with all of whom he was ready to gossip, and interchange candid inquiries. The Mr. John Gibbon, who writes to him (vol. i. p. 168), is Gibbon the herald, ancestor of the historian, of whom the latter gives such an amusing account in his Memoirs. John was as good a Dominie Sampson in his way as Pepys's heart could

desire. Sir Walter himself could not have devised a better epistle for his fictitious worthy, in style, subject, or logic, than is here furnished by the true one:—

"Mr. Gibbon to Pepys.

"Good Sir, "*August* 27, 1675.

"I pray pardon me; I am sorry I appeared so abruptly before you. I'll assure you, a paper of the same nature with the enclosed was left for you at the public office some ten days since, as likewise for every one of the commissioners. But, sir, I am heartily glad of the miscarriage; for now I have an opportunity to request a favour by writing, that I could hardly have had confidence by word of mouth to have done; and in that I have much want of my friend Mr.——.

"Sir, a gentlewoman of my acquaintance told me, she had it for a great certainty from the family of the Montagus, that as you were one night playing late upon some musical instrument, together with your friends, there suddenly appeared a human feminine shape and vanished, and after that continued.

"Walking in the garden you espied the appearing person, demanded of her if, at such a time, she was not in such a place. She answered No; but she dreamed she was, and heard excellent music.

"Sir, satisfaction is to you my humble request. And if it be so, it confirms the opinions of the ancient Romans concerning their genii, and confutes those of the Sadducees and Epicures.—Sir, your most humble servant,

"John Gibbon."

There is no answer from Pepys. But that Mr. Gibbon would have derived no great "satisfaction" from one, appears by an item in the Tangier Diary:—"At supper with my lord. Discourse about spirits—Dr. Ken asserting there were such, and I,

with the rest, denying it." The jolly materiality of which our supper-eater's nature was made was not likely to find much ground for the sole of its feet in the world of spirits.

The next letter in the collection, from "Mr. Daniel Skinner," determines a question among the curious, as to who the "Mr. Skinner" was, to whom a manuscript parcel belonging to Milton had been directed, and how the parcel came into the hands of the State Paper Office. Anthony Wood assumed that it was Cyriack Skinner, to whom the poet has addressed two of his sonnets; but it is now clear that it was the Mr. Daniel Skinner before us, and a very unworthy person he appears to have been for the honour of such a trust. The parcel consisted of Milton's unpublished Latin Treatise on Christian Doctrine, and a complete and corrected copy of all the Letters to foreign princes and states, written by him when he officiated as Latin Secretary. Skinner, who seems to have been one of the young men that Milton drew about him for purposes of training, had evidently had both these works put into his hands for publication; and after the poet's death he tried to make a penny of the Latin Letters with one of the Elzevirs, the well-known Dutch printers; while, at the same time, he was obtaining favours from the new government. Sir Joseph Williamson, the busy Secretary of State, discerned the nature of the man through his fawning and protesting manners; and after contriving to get possession of the

Manuscript Treatise, and to quash the republication of the Letters, withdrew the favours of government, and left the double-dealing Mr. Skinner to his fate. Skinner's letter to Pepys, now first published, is a canting but obvious enough account of the whole business; including an apology for the "grand presumption" of having begged "his worship" for a loan of "ten pounds" (a petition which Pepys had granted), and a modest request, that the Navy Secretary would be pleased "instantly to repair" to the Secretary of State, and absolve Mr. Daniel Skinner from the guilt of having anything more to do with Elzevir, or with any manuscript paper whatsoever. He says:—"Though I *happened* to be acquainted with Milton in his lifetime (which out of mere love to learning, I *procured*, and no other concerns ever passed betwixt us but a great desire and ambition of some of his learning), I am, and ever was, so far from being in the least *tainted* with any of his principles, that I may boldly say, none has greater honour and loyalty for his majesty, more veneration for the church of England, and love for his country, than I have. Once more, I beg your worship, and with tears, instead of ink that might supply my pen, I implore that you would prevail with Sir Joseph," &c. As if those who went to learn anything of the great poet and republican, had gone to him with letters of recommendation from church and state, and would have made even a surreptitious profit of his works out of a love for

Charles the Second! This base fellow, "untainted" by Milton, was, probably, not unconnected with the more respectable Skinner whom the poet knew, and with the old puritan connexions of Pepys himself. There are some respectful letters from Pepys, dated a few years afterwards, to a "Mrs. Skinner," and a subsequent letter to him from a "Mrs. Frances Skinner," respecting an ungracious son of hers who behaved ill in his service; and for whom, with a somewhat energetic maternity, she expresses a wish that his employer had "broken all his bones, limb from limb."

There is nothing more worth extracting at any length; and we shall not repeat letters which have appeared before—such as the one from Dryden. The supplemental editor, however, who appears to have succeeded Mr. Rutt, might have known that Dryden and Pepys were acquainted long before the time he conjectures. Several well-known particulars might also have been omitted in the notes, and some new ones easily put in their place by an inquirer into biography; but it is due to the publication to state, that the materials are well arranged throughout, and the chronology studiously attended to. Nor will the lovers of official history, and of the growth of our public foundations, read without interest some of the correspondence of James's admiral, Lord Dartmouth, and the instances of Pepys anxiety to do everything he could for the advancement of the naval and grammar schools of

that excellent institution, Christ Hospital; of the former of which he may be said to have been the founder, though Charles got the honour of it.

We shall extract a few more short passages, however, before we take leave of Pepys. In his answer to the following letter, we grieve to say that we have caught him tripping; but the Montagus, however proud he had once been of the relationship, and in spite of what the earl had done for him on his entrance into life, were lavish of their own means, and had become rather awkward neighbours. Lord Sandwich gambled, and was otherwise careless and expensive.

"LORD HINCHINGBROKE TO MR. PEPYS.

"SIR, "*December* 9, 1667.

"There being a letter of exchange come, of about 250*l.* 8*s.* payable to the Spanish ambassador within four or five days, my father having writ very earnestly (from Spain, where he was English ambassador) that it may be punctually paid, and Mr. Moore having not any way to procure it, makes me take the liberty of troubling you, to desire your assistance in it. If you can with any convenience do it, you will do a great kindness to my father and me, who am, dear cousin, your most affectionate cousin and humble servant,

"HINCHINGBROKE."

"MR. PEPYS TO LORD HINCHINGBROKE.

"MY LORD,

"My condition is such, and hath been ever since the credit of the king's assignments was broke by the failure of the bankers, that I have not been able these six months to raise a farthing for answering my most urgent occasions.

"I am heartily afflicted for this difficulty that is upon your lordship; and if upon my endeavours with the bankers I can procure any money, I will not fail to give your lordship it; being very desirous of the preservation of my lordship's credit, as well as for all his other concernments. Your lordship's obedient servant, "S. PEPYS."

Now, though Pepys might not have been able to "raise a farthing" within these "six months" after any of the customary modes, he, not two months before, had raised nearly fourteen hundred pounds in gold out of the ground; to-wit, dug up so much which he had buried during his "fright" about public affairs and the Dutch. Lord Hinchingbroke's letter, however, is endorsed by Pepys, "Dec. 19, 1667.—60*l.* this day lent my lord of Sandwich" (he pretended to be all that while getting it of the bankers), and next year he lends the noble earl six hundred pounds. These little prudent stratagems did not hinder him from being really generous. He might have died rich, but was not so; and he was liberal of his aid to many during his life.

MR. JAMES HOUBLON TO PEPYS.

* * * "Lawyers have laboured to perplex titles (to estates) as much as some interested divines have our religion; so that our title to heaven is made out to be as difficult a matter as that we have to our lands."

PEPYS (IN THE COUNTRY) TO MR. HEWER IN TOWN.

* * * "There is also in the same drawer a collection of my lord of Rochester's poems, written before his penitence, in a style I thought unfit to mix with my other books. However,

pray let it remain there; for, as he is past writing any more so bad in one sense, so I despair of any man surviving him to write so good in another!"

"SIR ROBERT SOUTHWELL TO PEPYS.

* * * "I am here among my children—at least an innocent scene of life—and I endeavour to explain to them the difference between right and wrong. My next care is to contrive for the health which I lost *by sitting many years at the sack-bottle;* so that to keep myself in idleness and in motion is a great part of my discipline."

DR. ROBERT WOOD TO PEPYS RESPECTING THE BUILDING OF SHIPS.

* * * "I reckon that naval excels land architecture, in the same proportion as a living moving animal a dull plant! Palaces themselves are only like better sorts of trees, which, how beautiful or stately soever, remain but as prisoners, chained during life to the spot they stand on; whereas the very spirits that inform and move ships *are of the highest degree of animals*, viz. rational creatures; *I mean seamen.*"

SIR JOHN WYBORNE TO PEPYS, FROM BOMBAY.

* * * "Sir, I have sent you *a very grave walking-cane*, which I beg you to accept, having nothing else I could venture to send."

PEPYS TO SIR ANTHONY DEANE.

"I am alive, too, I thank God! and as serious, I fancy, as you can be, and not less alone. Yet, I thank God, too! I have not within me one of those melancholy misgivings that you seem haunted with. *The worse the world uses me, the better, I think, I am bound to use myself.*"

With this most reasonable opinion we close our accounts with the amusing sage of the Admiralty.

Many official patriots have, doubtless, existed since his time, and thousands, nay, millions of respectable men of all sorts gone to their long account, more or less grave in public, and frail to their consciences; but when shall we meet with such another as he was; pleased, like a child, with his new coach, and candid about his hat? Who will own, as he did, that, having made a present by way of douceur, he is glad, considering no harm is done, of having it back? Who will acknowledge his superstitions, his "frights," his ignorances, his not liking to be seen in public with men out of favour? or who so honestly divide his thoughts about the public good, and even his relations of the most tragical events, with mentions of a new coat from the tailor, and fond records of the beauty-spots on his wife's face?

LIFE AND LETTERS

OF

MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ.*

Singular and fortunate reputation of Madame de Sévigné.—Unsatisfactory biographies of her.—Her parentage, education, and early life.—Description of her person and manners.—United with the Marquis de Sévigné.—His frivolities and death.—Unsuccessful love made to her by her cousin Bussy Rabutin, who revenges himself by calumny.—Character and conduct of Bussy.—His correspondence with his cousin.—His account of the effect produced upon her by her dancing with the king.—The young widow's mode of life.—Her visits at court, and observations of public occurrences.—Her life in the country.—List and characters of her associates.—Account of the Marquis her son, and of her correspondence with her daughter, Madame de Grignan.—Surviving descendants of the family.—Specimens of Madame de Sévigné's letters.—Expected marriage of Lauzan with Mademoiselle.—Strange ways of Pomenars, and of Du Plessis.—Story of

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* From the *Edinburgh Review*. "Madame de Sévigné and her Contemporaries." 2 vols. 8vo. London, 1842.

the footman who couldn't make hay.—Tragical terminations of gay campaigns.—Brinvilliers and La Voisin, the poisoners.—Striking catastrophe in a ball-room.—A scene at court.—Splendour of Madame de Montespan.—Description of an iron-foundry; of a gallop of coaches; of a great wedding; of a crowded assembly.—Horace Walpole's account of Madame de Sévigné's house at Livry.—Character of her writings by Sir James Mackintosh.—Attempt to form their true estimate.

MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ, in her combined and inseparable character as writer and woman, enjoys the singular and delightful reputation of having united, beyond all others of her class, the rare with the familiar, and the lively with the correct. The moment her name is mentioned, we think of the mother who loved her daughter; of the most charming of letter-writers; of the ornament of an age of license, who incurred none of its ill-repute; of the female who has become one of the classics of her language, without effort and without intention.

The sight of a name so attractive, in the title-page of the volumes before us, has made us renew an intercourse, never entirely broken, with her own. We have lived over again with her and her friends from her first letter to her last, including the new matter in the latest Paris edition. We have seen her writing in her cabinet, dancing at court, being the life of the company in her parlour, nursing her old uncle the Abbé; bantering Mademoiselle du

Plessis; lecturing and then jesting with her son; devouring the romances of Calprenede, and responding to the wit of Pascal and La Fontaine; walking in her own green alleys by moonlight, enchanting cardinals, politicians, philosophers, beauties, poets, devotees, haymakers; ready to "die with laughter" fifty times a day; and idolizing her daughter for ever.

It is somewhat extraordinary, that of all the admirers of a woman so interesting, not one has yet been found in these islands to give any reasonably good account of her—any regular and comprehensive information respecting her life and writings. The notices in the biographical dictionaries are meagre to the last degree; and "sketches" of greater pretension have seldom consisted of more than loose and brief memorandums, picked out of others, their predecessors. The name which report has assigned to the compiler of the volumes before us, induced us to entertain sanguine hopes that something more satisfactory was about to be done for the queen of letter-writing; and undoubtedly the portrait which has been given of her, is, on the whole, the best hitherto met with. But still it is a limited, hasty, and unfinished portrait, forming but one in a gallery of others; many of which have little to do with her, and some, scarcely any connection even with her times.

Proceeding therefore to sketch out, from our own

acquaintance with her, what we conceive to be a better mode of supplying some account of Madame de Sévigné and her writings, we shall, in the order of time, speak of her ancestors and other kindred, her friends and her daily habits, and give a few specimens of the best of her letters; and we shall do all this with as hearty a relish of her genius as the warmest of her admirers, without thinking it necessary to blind ourselves to any weaknesses that may have accompanied it. With all her good-nature, the "charming woman" had a sharp eye to a defect herself; and we have too great a respect for the truth that was in her, not to let her honestly suffer in its behalf, whenever that first cause of all that is great and good demands it.

Marie de Rabutin-Chantal, Baroness de Chantal and Bourbilly, afterwards Marchioness de Sévigné, was born, in all probability, in Burgundy, in the old ancestral *château* of Bourbilly, between Semur and Epoisses, on the 5th of February 1627. Her father, Celse Benigne de Rabutin, Baron as above mentioned, was of the elder branch of his name, and cousin to the famous Count Bussy-Rabutin; her mother, Marie de Coulanges, daughter of a secretary of state, was also of a family whose name afterwards became celebrated for wit; and her paternal grandmother, Jeanne Françoise Fremyot, afterwards known by the title of the Blessed Mother of Chantal, was a *saint*. The nuns of the Order of the Visitation, which was founded by the help of St. Francis

de Sales, beatified her, with the subsequent approbation of Benedict XIV; and she was canonized by Clement XIV (Ganganelli) in 1767. There was a relationship between the families of Rabutin and de Sales, names which it would be still stranger than it is to see in conjunction, had not the good St. Francis been the liveliest and most tolerant of his class. We notice these matters, because it is interesting to discover links between people of celebrity, and because it would be but a sorry philosophy which should deny the probable effects produced in the minds and dispositions of a distinguished race by intermixtures of blood and associations of ideas. Madame de Sévigné's father, for instance, gave a rough foretaste of her wit and sincerity, by a raillery amounting to the *brusque*, sometimes to the insolent. He wrote the following congratulatory epistle to a minister of finance, whom the King (Louis XIII.) had transformed into a marshal:—

"My Lord,

"Birth; black beard; intimacy.

"CHANTAL."

Meaning, that his new fortune had been owing to his quality, to his position near the royal person, and to his having a black beard like his master. Both the Chantals and the Fremyots, a race remarkable for their integrity, had been among the warmest adherents of Henry IV.; and, indeed, the whole united stock may be said to have been distinguished equally for worth, spirit, and ability, till it took a

twist of intrigue and worldliness in the solitary instance of the scapegrace Bussy. We may discern, in the wit and integrity of Madame de Sévigné—in her natural piety, in her cordial partizanship, and at the same time in that tact for universality which distinguished her in spite of it—a portion of what was best in all her kindred, not excepting a spice of the satire of her supercilious cousin, but without his malignity. She was truly the flower of the family tree; and laughed at the top of it with a brilliancy as well as a softness, compared with which Bussy was but a thorn.

The little heiress was only a few months old when the Baron de Chantal died, bravely fighting against the English in their descent on the Isle of Rhé. It was one of the figments of Gregorio Leti, that he received his death-wound from the hand of Cromwell. The Baron's widow survived her husband only five years; and it seems to have been expected that the devout grandmother, Madame de Chantal the elder, would have been anxious to take the orphan under her care. But whether it was that the mother had chosen to keep the child too exclusively under her own, or that the future saint was too much occupied in the concerns of the other world and the formation of religious houses (of which she founded no less than eighty-seven), the old lady contented herself with recommending her to the consideration of an Archbishop, and left her in the hands of her maternal relations. They did their

part nobly by her. She was brought up with her fellow-wit and correspondent, Philippe-Emanuel de Coulanges; and her uncle Christophe, Abbé de Livry, became her second father, in the strictest and most enduring sense of the word. He took care that she should acquire graces at court, as well as encouragements to learning from his friends; saw her married, and helped to settle her children; extricated her affairs from disorder, and taught her to surpass himself in knowledge of business; in fine, spent a good remainder of his life with her, sometimes at his own house and sometimes at hers; and when he died, repaid the tenderness with which she had rewarded his care, by leaving her all his property. The Abbé, with some little irritable peculiarities, and a love of extra-comfort and his bottle, appears to have been, as she was fond of calling him, *bien bon*, a right good creature; and posterity is to be congratulated, that her faculties were allowed to expand under his honest and reasonable indulgence, instead of being cramped, and formalized, and made insincere, by the half-witted training of the convent.

Young ladies at that time were taught little more than to read, write, dance, and embroider, with greater or less attention to books of religion. If the training was conventual, religion was predominant (unless it was rivalled by comfit and flower-making, great pastimes of the good nuns); and in the devout case, the danger was, either that the people would

be frightened into bigotry, or, what happened oftener, would be tired into a passion for pleasure and the world, and only stocked with a sufficient portion of fear and superstition to return to the bigotry in old age, when the passion was burnt out. When the education was more domestic, profane literature had its turn—the poetry of Maynard and Malherbe, and the absurd but exalting romances of Gomberville, Scudery, and Calprenede. Sometimes a little Latin was added; and other tendencies to literature were caught from abbés and confessors. In all cases, somebody was in the habit of reading aloud while the ladies worked; and a turn for politics and court-gossip was given by the wars of the *Fronde*, and by the allusions to the heroes and heroines of the reigning gallantries, in the ideal personages of the romances. The particulars of Madame de Sévigné's education have not transpired; but as she was brought up at home, and we hear something of her male teachers, and nothing of her female (whom, nevertheless, she could not have been without), the probability is that she tasted something of all the different kinds of nurture, and helped herself with her own cleverness to the rest. She would hear of the example and reputation of her saintly grandmother, if she was not much with her; her other religious acquaintances rendered her an admirer of the worth and talents of the devotees of Port-Royal; her political ones interested her in behalf of the *Frondeurs;* but, above all, she had the

wholesome run of her good uncle's books, and the society of his friends, Chapelain, Menage, and other professors of polite literature; the effect of which is to fuse particular knowledge into general, and to distil from it the spirit of a wise humanity. She seems to have been not unacquainted with Latin and Spanish; and both Chapelain and Menage were great lovers of Italian, which became part of her favourite reading.

To these fortunate accidents of birth and breeding were joined health, animal spirits, a natural flow of wit, and a face and shape which, if not perfectly handsome, were allowed by everybody to produce a most agreeable impression. Her cousin Bussy Rabutin has drawn a portrait of her when a young woman; and though he did it half in malice and resentment, like the half-vagabond he was, he could not but make the same concession. He afterwards withdrew the worst part of his words, and heaped her with panegyric; and from a comparison of his different accounts we probably obtain a truer idea of her manners and personal appearance, than has been furnished either by the wholesale eulogist or the artist. It is, indeed, corroborated by herself in her letters. She was somewhat tall for a woman; had a good shape, a pleasing voice, a fine complexion, brilliant eyes, and a profusion of light hair; but her eyes, though brilliant, were small, and, together with the eyelashes, were of different tints; her lips, though well-coloured, were too flat; and the end of

her nose too "square." The jawbone, according to Bussy, had the same fault. He says that she had more shape than grace, yet danced well; and she had a taste for singing. He makes the coxcombical objection to her at that time of life, that she was too playful "for a woman of quality;" as if the liveliest genius and the staidest conventionalities could be reasonably expected to go together; or, as if she could have written her unique letters, had she resembled everybody else. Let us call to mind the playfulness of those letters, which have charmed all the world;—let us add the most cordial manners, a face full of expression in which the blood came and went, and a general sensibility which, if too quick perhaps to shed tears, was no less ready to "die with laughter" at every sally of pleasantry—and we shall see before us the not beautiful but still engaging and ever-lively creature, in whose countenance, if it contained nothing else, the power to write those letters must have been visible; for though people do not always seem what they are, it is seldom they do not look what they can do.

The good uncle, the Abbé de Coulanges, doubtless thought he had made a happy match of it, and joined like with like, when, at the age of eighteen, his charming niece married a man of as joyous a character as herself, and of one of the first houses in Brittany. The Marquis de Sévigné, or Sevigny (the old spelling), was related to the Duguesclins and the Rohans, and also to Cardinal de Retz. But

joyousness, unfortunately, was the sum-total of his character. He had none of the reflection of his bride. He was a mere laugher and jester, fond of expense and gallantry; and, though he became the father of two children, seems to have given his wife but little of his attention. He fell in a duel about some female, seven years after his marriage. The poor man was a braggart in his amours. Bussy says, that he boasted to him of the approbation of Ninon de l'Enclos; a circumstance which, like a great number of others told in connection with the "modern Leontium," is by no means to be taken for granted. Ninon was a person of a singular repute, owing to as singular an education; and while, in consequence of that education, a license was given her, which, to say the truth, most people secretly took, the graces and good qualities which she retained in spite of it, ultimately rendered her house a sort of academy of good breeding, which it was thought not incompatible with sober views in life to countenance. Now it is probable, from the great reputation which she had for good sense, that she always possessed discernment enough to see through such a character as that of Monsieur de Sévigné. The wife, it is true, many years afterwards, accused her, to the young Marquis, of having "spoilt (or hurt) his father," (*gâté*), and it may have been true to a certain extent; for a false theory of love would leave a nature like his nothing to fall back upon in regard to right feeling; but people of the Marquis's sort

generally come ready spoilt into society, and it is only an indulgent motive that would palm off their faults upon the acquaintances they make there. Be this as it may, Bussy Rabutin, who had always made love to his cousin after his fashion, and who had found it met with as constant rejection, though not perhaps till he had been imprudently suffered to go the whole length of his talk about it, avows that he took occasion, from the Marquis's boast about Ninon, to make her the gross and insulting proposal, that she should take her "revenge." Again she repulsed him. A letter of Bussy's fell into her husband's hands, who forbade her to see him more; a prohibition of which she doubtless gladly availed herself. The Marquis perished shortly afterwards: and again her cousin made his coxcombical and successless love, which, however, he accuses her of receiving with so much pleasure as to show herself jealous when he transferred it to another; a weakness, alas! not impossible to very respectable representatives of poor human nature. But all which he says to her disadvantage must be received with caution; for, besides his having no right to say anything, he had the mean and uncandid effrontery to pretend that he was angry with her solely because she was not generous in money matters. He tells us, that after all he had done for her and her friends (what his favours were, God knows!), she refused him the assistance of her purse at a moment when his whole prospects in life were in danger. The real

amount of this charge appears to have been, that Bussy, who, besides being a man of pleasure and expense, was a distinguished cavalry officer, once needed money for a campaign; and that, applying to his cousin to help him, her uncle the Abbé, who had the charge of her affairs, thought proper to ask him for securities. The cynical and disgusting, though well-written book, in which the Count libelled his cousin (for, as somebody said of Petronius, he was an author *purissimæ impuritatis*), brought him afterwards into such trouble at court, that it cost him many years of exile to his estates, and a world of servile trouble and adulation to get back to the presence of Louis the Fourteenth, who could never heartily like him. He had ridiculed, among others, the kind-hearted La Vallière. Madame de Sévigné, in consequence of these troubles, forgave him; and their correspondence, both personally and by letter, was renewed, pleasantly enough on his part, and in a constant strain of regard and admiration. He tells her, among other pretty speeches, that she would certainly have been "goddess of something or other," had she lived in ancient times. But Madame de Sévigné writes to him with evident constraint, as to a sort of evil genius who is to be propitiated; and the least handsome incident in her life was the apparently warm interest she took in a scandalous process instituted by him against a gentleman whom his daughter had married, and whose crime consisted in being of inferior birth; for

Count Bussy Rabutin was as proud as he was profligate.* Bussy tried to sustain his cause by forged letters, and had the felicity of losing it by their assistance. It is to be hoped that his cousin had been the dupe of the forgeries; but we have no doubt that she was somewhat afraid of him. She dreaded his writing another book.

We know not whether it was during her married life, or afterwards, that Bussy relates a little incident of her behaviour at court, to which his malignity gives one of its most ingenious turns. They were both there together at a ball, and the King took her out to dance. On returning to her seat, according to the Count's narrative,—"'It must be owned,' said she, 'that the King possesses great qualities: he will certainly obscure the lustre of all his predecessors.' I could not help laughing in her face," observes Bussy, "seeing what had produced this panegyric. I replied, 'There can be no doubt of it, madam, after what he has done for yourself.' I really thought she was going to testify her gratitude by crying *Vive le Roi*." †

This is amusing enough; but the spirit which induces a man to make charges of this nature, is apt to be the one most liable to them itself. Men at the

* See a strange, painful, and vehement letter, written by her on the subject, to the Count de Guitaut. Vol. xiii. of the duodecimo Paris edition of 1823-4, p. 103.

† "Histoire Amoureuse des Gaules;" tom. i. p. 158. Cologne, 1709.

court of Louis used to weep, if he turned his face from them. The bravest behaved like little boys before him, vying for his favour as children might do for an apple. Racine is said to have died of the fear of having offended him; and Bussy, as we have before intimated, was not a whit behind the most pathetic of the servile, when he was again permitted to prostrate himself in the court circle. Madame de Sévigné probably felt on this occasion as every other woman would have felt, and was candid enough not to hide her emotion; but whether, instead of pretending to feel less, she might not have pleasantly affected still more, in order to regain her self-possession, and so carry it off with a grace, Bussy was not the man to tell us, even if his wit had had good-nature enough to discern it.

The young widow devoted herself to her children, and would never again hear of marriage. She had already become celebrated for her letters; continued to go occasionally to court; and frequented the reigning literary circles, then famous for their pedantry, without being carried away by it. Several wits and men of fashion made love to her, besides Bussy. Among them were the learned Menage, who courted her in madrigals compiled from the Italian; the superintendent of the finances, Fouquet, who, except in her instance and that of La Vallière, is said to have made Danaës wherever he chose to shower his gold; and the Prince of Conti, brother of the great Condé, who, with the self-sufficient airs

of a royal lover, declared that he found her charming, and that he had "a word or two to say to her next winter." Even the great Turenne is said to have loved her. On none of them did she take pity but the superintendent; and not on his heart, poor man, but on his neck; when it was threatened with the axe for his doing as his predecessors had done, and squandering the public money. Fouquet was magnificent and popular in his dishonesty, and hence the envious conspired to pull him down. Some of the earliest letters of Madame de Sévigné are on the subject of his trial, and show an interest in it so genuine, that fault has been found with them for not being so witty as the rest!

It was probably from this time that she began to visit the court less frequently, and to confine herself to those domestic and accomplished circles, in which, without suspecting it, she cultivated an immortal reputation for letter-writing. Her political and religious friends, the De Retzes and the Jansenists, grew out of favour, or rather into discredit, and she perhaps suffered herself to grow out of favour with them. She always manifested, however, great respect for the King; and Louis was a man of too genuine a gallantry not to be courteous to the lady whenever they met, and address to her a few gracious words. On one occasion she gazed upon the magnificent gaming-tables at court, and curtseyed to his Majesty, "after the fashion which her daughter," she says, "had taught her;" upon which

the monarch was pleased to bow, and look very acknowledging. And, another time, when Madame de Maintenon, the Pamela of royalty, then queen in secret, presided over the religious amusements of the King, she went to see Racine's play of Esther performed by the young ladies of St. Cyr; when Louis politely expressed his hope that she was satisfied, and interchanged a word with her in honour of the poet and the performers. She was not indeed at any time an uninterested observer of what took place in the world. She has other piquant, though not always very lucid notices of the court—was deeply interested in the death of Turenne—listens with emotion to the eloquence of the favourite preachers—records the atrocities of the poisoners, and is compelled by her good sense to leave off wasting her pity on the devout dulness of King James II. But the proper idea of her, for the greater part of her life, is that of a sequestered domestic woman, the delight of her friends, the constant reader, talker, laugher, and writer, and the passionate admirer of the daughter to whom she addressed the chief part of her correspondence. Sometimes she resided in Brittany, at an estate on the sea-coast, called the Rocks, which had belonged to her husband; sometimes she was at Livry, near Paris, where the good uncle possessed his abbey; sometimes at her own estate of Bourbilly, in Burgundy; and at others in her house in town, where the Hôtel Carnavalet (now a school) has become celebrated as her latest and

best-known residence. In all these abodes, not excepting the town-house, she made a point of having the enjoyment of a garden, delighting to be as much in the open air as possible, haunting her green alleys and her orangeries with a book in her hand or a song upon her lips (for she sang as she went about, like a child), and walking out late by moonlight in all seasons, to the hazard of colds and rheumatisms, from which she ultimately suffered severely. She was a most kind mistress to her tenants. She planted trees, made labyrinths, built chapels (inscribing them "to God"), watched the peasants dancing, sometimes played at chess (she did not like cards), and at almost all other times, when not talking with her friends, she was reading or hearing others read, or writing letters. The chief books and authors we hear of are Tasso, Ariosto, La Fontaine, Pascal, Nicole, Tacitus, the huge old romances, Rabelais, Rochefoucauld, the novels of her friend Madame de la Fayette, Corneille, Bourdaloue, and Bossuet, Montaigne, Lucian, Don Quixote, and St. Augustin; a goodly collection surely; a "circle of humanity." She reads the romances three times over; and when she is not sure that her correspondent will approve a book, says that her son has "brought her into it," or that he reads out "passages." Sometimes her household get up a little surprise or masquerade; at others, her cousin Coulanges brings his "song-book," and they are "the happiest people in the

world;" that is to say, provided her daughter is with her. Otherwise, the tears rush into her eyes at the thought of her absence, and she is always making "dragons" or "cooking,"—viz. having the blue-devils and fretting. But, when they all are comfortable, what they are most addicted to is "dying with laughter." They die with laughter if seeing a grimace; if told a bon-mot; if witnessing a rustic dance; if listening to Monsieur de Pomenars, who has always "some criminal affair on his hands;" if getting drenched with rain; if having a sore finger pinched instead of relieved. Here lounges the young Marquis on the sofa with his book; there sits the old Abbé in his arm-chair, fed with something nice; the ladies chat, and embroider, and banter Mademoiselle du Plessis; in comes Monsieur de Pomenars, with the news of some forgery that is charged against him, or livelier offence, but always so perilous to his neck that he and they "die with laughter." Enter, with his friend Madame de la Fayette, the celebrated Duke de la Rochefoucauld, gouty, but still graceful, and he and the lady "die with laughter;" enter the learned Corbinelli, and he dies; enter Madame de Coulanges, the sprightly mixture of airiness and witty malice, and she dies of course; and the happy mortality is completed by her husband, the singing cousin aforesaid—"a little round fat oily man," who was always "in" with some duke or cardinal, admiring his fine house and feasting at his table. These were among the most

prominent friends or associates of Madame de Sévigné; but there were also great lords and ladies, and neighbours in abundance, sometimes coming in when they were not wanted, but always welcomed with true French politeness, except when they had been heard to say anything against the "daughter;" and then Madame told them roundly to their faces that she was "not at home." There was Segrais, and Saint Pavin, and Corneille, and Bossuet; and Treville, who talked like a book; and the great Turenne, and the Duke de Vivonne (brother of Montespan), who called her "darling mamma;" and Madame Scarron, till she was Maintenon; and Madame de Fiesque, who did not know how to be afflicted; and D'Hacqueville, whose good offices it was impossible to tire; and fat Barillon, who said good things though he was a bad ambassador; and the Abbé Têtu, thin and lively; and Benserade, who was the life of the company wherever he went; and Brancas, who liked to choose his own rivals; and Cardinal de Retz in retirement, feeding his trout, and talking metaphysics. She had known the Cardinal for thirty years; and, during his last illness, used to get Corneille, Boileau, and Molière to come and read to him their new pieces. Perhaps there is no man of whom she speaks with such undeviating respect and regard as this once turbulent statesman, unless it be Rochefoucauld, who, to judge from most of her accounts of him, was a pattern of all that was the reverse of his "Maxims."

With her son the Marquis, who was "a man of wit and pleasure about town," till he settled into sobriety with a wife who is said to have made him devout, Madame de Sévigné lived in a state of confidence and unreserve, to an excess that would not be deemed very delicate in these days, and of which, indeed, she herself sometimes expresses her dislike. There is a well-known collection of letters, professing to have passed between him and Ninon de l'Enclos, which is spurious; but we gather some remarkable particulars of their intimacy from the letters of the mother to her daughter; and, among others, Ninon's sayings of him, that he had "a soul of pap," and the "heart of a cucumber fried in snow."

The little Marquis's friends (for he was small in his person) did not think him a man of very impassioned temperament. He was, however, very pleasant and kind, and an attentive son. He had a strong contempt, too, for "the character of Æneas," and the merit of never having treated Bussy Rabutin with any great civility. Rochefoucauld said of him, that his greatest ambition would have been to die for a love which he did not feel. He was at first in the army, but not being on the favourite side either in politics or religion, nor probably very active, could get no preferment worth having; so he ended in living unambitiously in a devout corner of Paris, and cultivating his taste for literature. He maintained a contest of some repute with Dacier, on the disput-

able meaning of the famous passage in Horace, *Difficile est propriè communia dicere.* His treatise on the subject may be found in the later Paris editions of his mother's letters; but the juxtaposition is not favourable to its perusal.

But sons, dukes, cardinals, friends, the whole universe, come to nothing in these famous letters, compared with the daughter to whom they owe their existence. She had not the good spirits of her mother, but she had wit and observation; and appears to have been so liberally brought up, that she sometimes startled her more acquiescent teacher with the hardihood of her speculations. It is supposed to have been owing to a scruple of conscience in her descendants, that her part of the correspondence was destroyed. She professed herself, partly in jest and partly in earnest, a zealous follower of Descartes. It is curious that the circumstance which gave rise to the letters, was the very one to which Madame de Sévigné had looked for saving her the necessity of correspondence. The young lady became the wife of a great lord, the Count de Grignan, who, being a man of the court, was expected to continue to reside in Paris; so that the mother trusted she should always have her daughter at hand. The Count, however, who was lieutenant-governor of Provence, received orders, shortly afterwards, to betake himself to that distant region: the continued non-residence of the Duke de Vendôme, the governor, conspired to keep him there, on and off, for the

remainder of the mother's existence—a space of six-and-twenty years; and though she contrived to visit and be visited by Madame de Grignan so often that they spent nearly half the time with each other, yet the remaining years were a torment to Madame de Sévigné, which nothing could assuage but an almost incessant correspondence. One letter was no sooner received than another was anxiously desired; and the daughter echoed the anxiety. Hours were counted, post-boys watched for, obstacles imagined, all the torments experienced, and not seldom manifested, of the most jealous and exacting passion, and at the same time all the delights and ecstasies vented of one the most confiding. But what we have to say of this excess of maternal love will be better kept for our concluding remarks. Suffice it to observe, in hastening to give our specimens of the letters, that these graver points of the correspondence, though numerous, occupy but a small portion of it; that the letters, generally speaking, consist of the amusing gossip and conversation which the mother *would have had* with the daughter, had the latter remained near her; and that Madame de Sévigné, after living, as it were, for no other purpose than to write them, and to straiten herself in her circumstances for both her children, died at her daughter's house in Provence, of an illness caused by the fatigue of nursing her through one of her own. Her decease took place in April 1696, in the seventieth year of her age. Her body, it is said,

long after, was found dressed in ribbons, after a Provençal fashion, at which she had expressed great disgust. Madame de Grignan did not survive many years. She died in the summer of 1705, of grief, it has been thought, for the loss of her only child, the Marquis de Grignan, in whom the male descendants of the family became extinct. It is a somewhat unpleasant evidence of the triumph of Ninon de l'Enclos over the mortality of her contemporaries, that, in one of the letters of the correspondence, this youth, the grandson of Madame de Sévigné's husband, and nephew of her son, is found studying good breeding at the table of that "grandmother of the Loves." The Count de Grignan, his father, does not appear to have been a very agreeable personage. Mademoiselle de Sévigné was his third wife. He was, therefore, not very young; he was pompous and fond of expense, and brought duns about her; and his face was plain, and it is said that he did not make up for his ill looks by the virtue of constancy. Madame de Sévigné seems to have been laudably anxious to make the best of her son-in-law. She accordingly compliments him on his "fine tenor voice;" and, because he has an uncomely face, is always admiring his "figure." One cannot help suspecting sometimes that there is a little malice in her intimations of the contrast, and that she admires his figure most when he will not let her daughter come to see her. The Count's only surviving child, Pauline, became the wife of Louis de

Simiane, Marquis d'Esparron, who seems to have been connected on the mother's side with our family of the Hays, and was lieutenant of the Scottish horse-guards in the service of the French king. Madame de Simiane inherited a portion both of the look and wit of her grandmother; but more resembled her mother in gravity of disposition. A daughter of hers married the Marquis de Vence; and of this family there are descendants now living; but the names of Grignan, Rabutin, and Sévigné, have long been extinct—in the body. In spirit they are now before us, more real than myriads of existing families; and we proceed to enjoy their deathless company.

We shall not waste the reader's time with the history of editions, and telling how the collection first partially transpired "against the consent of friends." Friends or families are too often afraid, or ashamed, or jealous, of what afterwards constitutes their renown; and we can only rejoice that the sweet "winged words" of the most flowing of pens, escaped, in this instance, out of their grudging boxes. We give the letters in English instead of French, not being by any means of opinion that "all who read and appreciate Madame de Sévigné, may be supposed to understand that language nearly as well as their own." Undoubtedly, people of the best natural understandings are glad, when, in addition to what nature has given them, they possess, in the knowledge of a foreign language, the best means of

appreciating the wit that has adorned it. But it is not impossible that some such people, nay many, in this age of "diffusion of knowledge," may have missed the advantages of a good education, and yet be able to appreciate the imperfectly conveyed wit of another, better than some who are acquainted with its own vehicle. Besides, we have known very distinguished people confess, that all who read, or even speak French, do not always read it with the same ready result and comfort to the eyes of their understandings as they do their own language; and as to the "impossibility" of translating such letters as those of Madame de Sévigné, though the specimens hitherto published have not been very successful, we do not believe it. Phrases here and there may be so; difference of manners may render some few untranslateable in so many words, or even unintelligible; but for the most part the sentences will find their equivalents, if the translator is not destitute of the spirits that suggested them. We ourselves have been often given to understand, that we have been too much in the habit of assuming that French, however widely known, was still more known than it is; and we shall endeavour, on the present occasion, to make an attempt to include the whole of our readers in the participation of a rare intellectual pleasure.

The first letter in the Collection, written when Madame de Sévigné was a young and happy mother, gives a delightful foretaste of what its readers have

to expect. She was then in her twentieth year, with a baby in her arms, and nothing but brightness in her eyes.

TO THE COUNT DE BUSSY RABUTIN.

"March 15th (1647*).

"You are a pretty fellow, are you not? to have written me nothing for these two months. Have you forgotten who I am, and the rank I hold in the family? 'Faith, little cadet, I will make you remember it. If you put me out of sorts, I will reduce you to the ranks. You knew I was about to be confined, and yet took no more trouble to ask after my health than if I had remained a spinster. Very well: be informed, to your confusion, that I have got a boy, who shall suck hatred of you into his veins with his mother's milk, and that I mean to have a great many more, purely to supply you with enemies. You have not the wit to do as much, you with your feminine productions.

"After all, my dear cousin, my regard for you is not to be concealed. Nature will proclaim it in spite of art. I thought to scold you for your laziness through the whole of this letter; but I do my heart too great a violence; and must conclude with telling you, that M. de Sévigné and myself love you very much, and often talk of the pleasure we should have in your company."

Bussy writes very pleasantly in return; but it will be so impossible to make half the extracts we desire from Madame de Sévigné's own letters, that we must not be tempted to look again into those of others. The next that we shall give is the famous one on the Duke de Lauzun's intended marriage

* Madame de Sévigné never, in dating her letters, gave the *years*. They were added by one of her editors.

with the Princess Henrietta of Bourbon; one of the most striking, though not the most engaging, in the collection. We might have kept it for a climax, were it not desirable to preserve a chronological order. It was written nearly four and twenty years after the letter we have just given; which we mention to show how she had retained her animal spirits. The person to whom it is addressed is her jovial cousin De Coulanges. The apparent tautologies in the exordium are not really such. They only represent a continued astonishment, wanting words to express itself, and fetching its breath at every comma.

TO MONS. DE COULANGES.

"Paris, Monday, 15th December (1670).

"I am going to tell you a thing, which of all things in the world is the most astonishing, the most surprising, the most marvellous, the most miraculous, the most triumphant, the most bewildering, the most unheard-of, the most singular, the most extraordinary, the most incredible, the most unexpected, the most exalting, the most humbling, the most rare, the most common, the most public, the most private (till this moment), the most brilliant, the most enviable—in short, a thing of which no example is to be found in past times; at least, nothing quite like it;—a thing which we know not how to believe in Paris; how then are you to believe it at Lyons? a thing which makes all the world cry out, 'Lord have mercy on us!' a thing which has transported Madame de Rohan and Madame d'Hauterive; a thing which is to be done on Sunday, when those who see it will not believe their own eyes; a thing which is to be done on Sunday, and yet perhaps will not be finished till Monday. I cannot expect you to guess it at once. I give you a trial of three times; *do you give it up?* Well, then, I must tell you.

M. de Lauzun is to marry, next Sunday, at the Louvre, guess whom? I give you four times to guess it in: I give you six: I give you a hundred. 'Truly,' cries Madame de Coulanges, 'it must be a very difficult thing to guess; 't is Madame de la Vallière.' No, it is n't, Madame. ''T is Mademoiselle de Retz then?' No, it isn't, Madame: you are terribly provincial. "Oh, we are very stupid, no doubt!' say you: ''t is Mademoiselle Colbert.' Further off than ever. 'Well, then, it must be Mademoiselle de Créqui?' You are not a bit nearer. Come, I see I must tell you at last. Well, M. de Lauzun marries, next Sunday, at the Louvre, with the king's permission, Mademoiselle, Mademoiselle de —— Mademoiselle —— guess the name;—he marries MADEMOISELLE'—the *great* Mademoiselle! Mademoiselle, the daughter of the late MONSIEUR; Mademoiselle, grand-daughter of Henry the Fourth; Mademoiselle d'Eu, Mademoiselle de Dombes, Mademoiselle de Montpensier, Mademoiselle d'Orleans, Mademoiselle, cousin-german of the king, Mademoiselle destined to the throne, Mademoiselle, the only woman in France fit to marry Monsieur. Here 's pretty news for your coteries. Exclaim about it as much as you will;—let it turn your heads; say we 'lie' if you please; that it 's a pretty joke; that it 's 'tiresome;' that we are a 'parcel of ninnies.' We give you leave; we have done just the same to others. Adieu! The letters that come by the post, will show whether we have been speaking truth or not."

Never was French vivacity more gay, more spirited, more triumphant, than in this letter. There is a regular siege laid to the reader's astonishment; and the titles of the bride come like the pomp of victory. Or, to use a humbler image, the reader is thrown into the state of the child, who is told to open his mouth and shut his eyes, and wait for what God will send him. The holder of the secret hovers in

front of the expectant, touching his lips and giving him nothing; and all is a merry flutter of laughter, guessing, and final transport. And yet this will not suit the charming misgiving that follows. Alas, for the poor subject of the wonder! The marriage was stopped; it was supposed to have taken place secretly; and Mademoiselle, who was then forty-five years of age, and had rejected kings, is said to have found her husband so brutal, that he one day called to her, "Henrietta of Bourbon, pull off my boots." The boots were left on, and the savage discarded.

The letter we give next—or rather, of which we give passages—is a good specimen of the way in which the writer goes from subject to subject;—from church to the fair, and from the fair to court, and to mad dogs, and Ninon de l'Enclos, and sermons on death, and so round again to royalty and "a scene." It is addressed to her daughter.

TO MADAME DE GRIGNAN.

"Paris, Friday, March 13 (1671).

"Behold me, to the delight of my heart, all alone in my chamber, writing to you in tranquillity. Nothing gives me comfort like being seated thus. I dined to-day at Madame de Lavardin's, after having been to hear Bourdaloue, where I saw the Mothers of the Church; for so I call the Princess de Conti and Longueville.* All the world was at the sermon, and the sermon was worthy of all that heard it. I thought of you twenty times, and wished you as often beside me. You would

* Great sinners, who had become great saints.

have been enchanted to be a listener, and I should have been tenfold enchanted to see you listen. * * * * * We have been to the fair, to see a great fright of a woman, bigger than Riberpré, by a whole head. She lay-in the other day of two vast infants, who came into the world abreast, with their arms a-kimbo. You never beheld such a *tout-ensemble!* * * * And now, if you fancy all the maids of honour run mad, you will not fancy amiss. Eight days ago, Madame de Ludre, Coëtlogon, and little De Rouvroi were bitten by a puppy belonging to Théobon, and the puppy has died mad; so Ludre, Coëtlogon, and De Rouvroi set off this morning for the coast, to be dipped three times in the sea. 'T is a dismal journey: Benserade is in despair about it. Théobon does not choose to go, though she had a little bite too. The queen, however, objects to her being in waiting till the issue of the adventure is known. Don't you think Ludre resembles Andromeda? For my part, I see her fastened to the rock, and Treville coming, on a winged horse, to deliver her from the monster. '*Ah, Zeesus! Madame de Grignan, vat a sing to pe trown all naket into te sea!*' "†

* * * "Your brother is under the jurisdiction of Ninon. I cannot think it will do him much good. There are people to whom it does no good at all. She hurt his father. Heaven help him, say I! It is impossible for Christian people, or at least for such as would fain be Christian, to look on such disorders without concern. Ah, Bourdaloue! what divine truths you told us to-day about death. Madame de la Fayette heard him for the first time in her life, and was transported with admiration. She is enchanted with your remembrances. * * *

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† "*Ah, Zesu! Madame de Grignan, l'etrqnge sose l'être zettle toute nue tans la mer.*" Madame de Ludre, by her pronunciation, was either a very affected speaker, or seems to have come from the "borders." Madame de Sévigné, by the tone of her narration, could hardly have believed there was anything serious in the accident.

A scene took place yesterday at Mademoiselle's, which I enjoyed extremely. In comes Madame de Gèvres, full of her airs and graces. She looked as if she expected I should give her my post; but, faith, I owed her an affront for her behaviour the other day, so I didn't budge. Mademoiselle was in bed; Madame de Gèvres was therefore obliged to go lower down: no very pleasant thing that. Mademoiselle calls for drink; somebody must present the napkin; Madame de Gèvres begins to draw off the glove from her skinny hand; I give a nudge to Madame d'Arpajon, who was above me; she understands me, draws off her own glove, and, advancing a step with a very good grace, cuts short the duchess, and takes and presents the napkin. The duchess was quite confounded; she had made her way up, and got off her gloves, and all to see the napkin presented before her by Madame d'Arpajon. My dear, I'm a wicked creature; I was in a state of delight; and, indeed, what could have been better done? Would any one but Madame de Gèvres have thought of depriving Madame d'Arpajon of an honour which fell so naturally to her share, standing, as she did, by the bedside? It was as good as a cordial to Madame de Puisieux. Mademoiselle did not dare to lift up her eyes; and, as for myself, I had the most good-for-nothing face."

Had Madame de Gèvres seen the following passage in a letter of the 10th of June, in the same year, it might have tempted her to exclaim, "Ah, you see what sort of people it is that treat me with malice!" —It must have found an echo in thousands of bosoms; and the conclusion of the extract is charming.

* * * "My dear, I wish very much I could be religious. I plague La Mousse about it every day. I belong at present neither to God nor devil, and I find this condition very uncomfortable; though, between you and me, I think it the most

natural in the world. One does not belong to the devil, because one fears God, and has at bottom a principle of religion; but then, on the other hand, one does not belong to God, because his laws appear hard, and self-denial is not pleasant. Hence the great number of the lukewarm, which does not surprise me at all. I enter perfectly into their reasons; only God, you know, hates them, and that must not be. But there lies the difficulty. Why must I torment you, however, with these endless rhapsodies? My dear child, *I ask your pardon*, as they say in these parts. I rattle on in your company, and forget everything else in the pleasure of it. Don't make me any answer. Send me only news of your health, with a spice of what you feel at Grignan, that I may know you are happy; that is all. Love me. We have turned the phrase into ridicule; but it is natural, it is good."

The Abbé de la Mousse here mentioned was a connection of the Coulangeses, and was on a visit to Madame de Sévigné at her house in Brittany, reading poetry and romance. The weather was so rainy and cold, that we of this island are pleased to see one of her letters dated from her "fireside" on the 24th of June. Pomenars, the criminal gentleman who was always afraid of losing his head, was one of her neighbours; and another was the beforementioned Mademoiselle du Plessis, whom the daughter's aversion and her own absurdities conspired to render the butt of the mother. It is said of Pomenars, who was a marquis, that having been tried for uttering false money, and cleared of the charge, he paid the expenses of the action in the same coin. It must have been some very counteracting good quality, however, in addition to his

animal spirits, that kept his friends in good heart with him; for Madame de Sévigné never mentions him but with an air of delight. He was, at this moment, under a charge of abduction; not, apparently, to any very great horror on the part of the ladies. Madame de Sévigné, however, tells her daughter that she talked to him about it very seriously, adding the jest, nevertheless, that the state of the dispute between him and his accuser was, that the latter wanted to "have his head," and Pomenars would not let him take it. "The Marquis," she says, in another letter, "declined shaving till he knew to whom his head was to belong." The last thing we remember of him is his undergoing a painful surgical operation; after which he rattled on as if nothing had happened. But then he had been the day before to Bourdaloue, to confess, for the first time during eight years. Here is the beginning of a letter, in which he and Du Plessis are brought delightfully together.

TO MADAME DE GRIGNAN.

"The Rocks, Sunday, 26th July (1671).

"You must know, that as I was sitting all alone in my chamber yesterday, intent upon a book, I saw the door opened by a tall lady-like woman, who was ready to choke herself with laughing. Behind her came a man, who laughed louder still, and the man was followed by a very well-shaped woman, who laughed also. As for me, I began to laugh before I knew who they were, or what had set them a-laughing; and though I was expecting Madame de Chaulnes to spend a day or two with me here, I looked a long time before I could think it was she. She

it was, however; and with her she had brought Pomenars, who had put it in her head to surprise me. The fair *Murinette** was of the party; and Pomenars was in such excessive spirits that he would have gladdened melancholy itself. They fell to playing battledoor and shuttlecock—Madame de Chaulnes plays it like you; and then came a lunch, and then we took one of our nice little walks, and the talk was of you throughout. I told Pomenars how you took all his affairs to heart, and what relief you would experience had he nothing to answer to but the matter in hand; but that such repeated attacks on his innocence quite overwhelmed you. We kept up this joke till the long walk reminded us of the fall you got there one day, the thought of which made me as red as fire. We talked a long time of that, and then of the dialogue with the gypsies, and at last of Mademoiselle du Plessis, and the nonsensical stuff she uttered; and how, one day, having treated you with some of it, and her ugly face being close to yours, you made no more ado, but gave her such a box on the ear as staggered her; upon which I, to soften matters, exclaimed, "How rudely these young people do play!" and then, turning to her mother, said, "Madam, do you know they were so wild this morning, they absolutely fought. Mademoiselle du Plessis provoked my daughter, and my daughter beat her: it was one of the merriest scenes in the world;" and with this turn Madame du Plessis was so delighted, that she expressed her satisfaction at seeing the young ladies so happy together. This trait of good fellowship between you and Mademoiselle du Plessis, whom I lumped together to make the box on the ear go down, made my visitors die with laughter. Mademoiselle de Murinais, in particular, approved your proceedings mightily, and vows that the first time Du Plessis thrusts her nose in her face, as she always does when she speaks to anybody, she will follow your example, and give her a good slap on the chaps. I

* Mademoiselle de Murinais.

expect them all to meet before long; Pomenars is to set the matter on foot; Mademoiselle is sure to fall in with it; a letter from Paris is to be produced, showing how the ladies there give boxes on the ears to one another, and this will sanction the custom in the provinces, and even make us desire them, in order to be in the fashion. In short, I never saw a man so mad as Pomenars: his spirits increase in the ratio of his criminalities; and, if he is charged with another, he will certainly die for joy."

These practical mystifications of poor Mademoiselle du Plessis are a little strong. They would assuredly not take place nowadays in society equal to that of Madame de Sévigné; but ages profit by their predecessors, and the highest breeding of one often becomes but second-rate in the next. If any thing, however, could warrant such rough admission to the freedom of a superior circle, it was the coarse *platitudes* and affectations of an uncouth neighbour like this; probably of a family as vulgar as it was rich, and which had made its way into a society unfit for it. Mademoiselle de Plessis seems to have assumed all characters in turn, and to have suited none except that of an avowed yet incorrigible teller of fibs. Madame Sévigné spoke to her plainly one day about these peccadilloes, and Mademoiselle cast down her eyes and said with an air of penitence, "Ah, yes, madam, it is very true; I am indeed the greatest liar in the world: I am very much obliged to you for telling me of it!" "It was exactly," says her reprover, "like Tartuffe—quite in his tone—Yes, brother, I am a miserable sinner, a

vessel of iniquity." Yet a week or two afterwards, giving an account of a family wedding-dinner, she said that the first course, for one day, included twelve hundred dishes. "We all sate petrified," says Madame de Sévigné. "At length I took courage and said, 'Consider a little, Mademoiselle, you must mean twelve, not twelve hundred. One sometimes has slips of the tongue.' 'Oh, no, Madam! it was twelve hundred, or eleven hundred, I am quite sure; I cannot say which, for fear of telling a falsehood, but one or the other I know it was;' and she repeated it twenty times, and would not bate us a single chicken. We found, upon calculation, that there must have been at least three hundred people to lard the fowls; that the dinner must have been served up in a great meadow, in tents pitched for the occasion; and that, supposing them only fifty, preparations must have been made a month beforehand.'

It is pleasant to bid adieu to Mademoiselle du Plessis, and breathe the air of truth, wit, and nature, in what has been justly called by the compiler of the work at the head of this article, one of "Madame de Sévigné's most charming letters."* The crime of the fine-gentleman servant who would not make hay, is set forth with admirable calmness and astonishment; and never before was the art of haymaking taught, or rather exemplified, in words so simple and so few.

* The original appears in the "Lettres Choisies," edited by Girault.

It is as if the pen itself had become a hay-fork, and tossed up a sample of the sweet grass. The pretended self-banter also, at the close, respecting long-winded narrations, is exquisite.

TO M. DE COULANGES.

"The Rocks, 22d July (1671).

"I write, my dear cousin, over and above the stipulated fortnight communications, to advertise you that you will soon have the honour of seeing Picard; and, as he is brother to the lacquey of Madame de Coulanges, I must tell you the reason why. You know that Madame the Duchess de Chaulnes is at Vitré: she expects the duke there, in ten or twelve days, with the States of Brittany.* Well, and what then? say you. I say, that the duchess is expecting the duke with all the states, and that meanwhile she is at Vitré all alone, dying with ennui. And what, return you, has this to do with Picard? Why, look; she is dying with ennui, and I am her only consolation, and so you may readily conceive that I carry it with a high hand over Mademoiselle de Kerbonne and de Kerqueoison. A pretty roundabout way of telling my story, I must confess; but it will bring us to the point. Well, then, as I am her only consolation, it follows that, after I have been to see her, she will come to see me, when, of course, I shall wish her to find my garden in good order, and my walks in good order—those fine walks, of which you are so fond. Still you are at a loss to conceive whither they are leading you now. Attend then, if you please, to a little suggestion by the way. You are aware that haymaking is going forward? Well, I have no haymakers: I send into the neighbouring fields to press them into my service; there are none to be found; and so all my own people are summoned to make hay instead. But do you know what haymaking is? I will tell you. Haymaking is the prettiest thing in the world.

* He was governor of the province.

You play at turning the grass over in a meadow; and, as soon as you know how to do that, you know how to make hay. The whole house went merrily to the task, all but Picard: he said he would not go; that he was not engaged for such work; that it was none of his business; and that he would sooner betake himself to Paris. 'Faith! didn't I get angry? It was the hundredth disservice the silly fellow had done me: I saw he had neither heart nor zeal; in short, the measure of his offence was full. I took him at his word; was deaf as a rock to all entreaties in his behalf; and he has set off. It is fit that people should be treated as they deserve. If you see him, don't welcome him; don't protect him; and don't blame me. Only look upon him as, of all servants in the world, the one the least addicted to haymaking, and therefore the most unworthy of good treatment. This is the sum total of the affair. As for me, I am fond of straightforward histories, that contain not a word too much; that never go wandering about, and beginning again from remote points; and accordingly, I think I may say, without vanity, that I hereby present you with the model of an agreeable narration."

In the course of the winter following this haymaking, Madame de Sévigné goes to Paris; and with the exception of an occasional visit to the house at Livry, to refresh herself with the spring-blossoms and the nightingales, remains there till July, when she visits her daughter in Provence, where she stayed upwards of a year, and then returned to the metropolis. It is not our intention to notice these particulars in future; but we mention them in passing, to give the reader an idea of the round of her life between her town and country houses, and the visits to Madame de Grignan, who sometimes came

from Provence to her. In the country, she does nothing but read, write, and walk, and occasionally see her neighbours. In town, she visits friends, theatres, churches, nunneries, and the court; is now at the Coulangeses, now dining with Rochefoucauld, now paying her respects to some branch of royalty; and is delighted and delighting wherever she goes, except when she is weeping for her daughter's absence, or condoling with the family disasters resulting from campaigns. In the summer of 1672 was the famous passage of the Rhine, at which Rochefoucauld lost a son, whose death he bore with affecting patience. The once intriguing but now devout princess, the Duchess de Longueville, had the like misfortune, which she could not endure so well. Her grief nevertheless was very affecting too, and Madame de Sévigné's plain and passionate account of it has been justly admired. In general, at the court of Louis XIV. all was apparently ease, luxury, and delight (with the exception of the jealousies of the courtiers and the squabble of the mistresses), but every now and then there is a campaign — and then all is glory, and finery, and lover's tears, when the warriors are setting out; and fright, and trepidation, and distracting suspense, when the news arrives of a bloody battle. The suspense is removed by undoubted intelligence; and then, while some are in paroxysms of pride and rapture at escapes, and exploits, and lucky wounds, others are plunged into misery by deaths.

EXTRACT FROM A LETTER TO MADAME DE GRIGNAN.

"You never saw Paris in such a state as it is now; everybody is in tears, or fears to be so: poor Madame de Nogent is beside herself; Madame de Longueville, with her lamentations, cuts people to the heart. I have not seen her; but you may rely on what follows. * * * * They sent to Port-Royal for M. Arnauld and Mademoiselle Vertus to break the news to her. The sight of the latter was sufficient. As soon as the duchess saw her—'Ah! Mademoiselle, how is my brother?' (the great Condé.) She did not dare to ask further. 'Madame, his wound is going on well; there has been a battle.' 'And my son?' No answer. 'Ah! Mademoiselle, my son, my dear child—answer me—is he dead?' 'Madame, I have not words to answer you.' 'Ah! my dear son; did he die instantly? had he not one little moment? Oh! great God, what a sacrifice!' And with that she fell upon her bed; and all which could express the most terrible anguish, convulsions, and faintings, *and a mortal silence*, and stifled cries, and the bitterest tears, and hands clasped towards heaven, and complaints the most tender and heart-rending—all this did she go through. She sees a few friends, and keeps herself barely alive, in submission to God's will; but has no rest; and her health, which was bad already, is visibly worse. For my part, I cannot help wishing her dead outright, not conceiving it possible that she can survive such a loss."

We have taken no notice of the strange death of Vatel, steward to the Prince de Condé, who killed himself out of a point of honour, because a dinner had not been served up to his satisfaction. It is a very curious relation, but more characteristic of the poor man than of the writer. For a like reason, we omit the interesting though horrible accounts of Brinvilliers and La Voisin, the poisoners. But we cannot help giving a tragedy told in a few words,

both because Madame de Sévigné was herself highly struck with it, and for another reason which will appear in a note.

"The other day, on his coming into a ball-room, a gentleman of Brittany was assassinated by two men in women's clothes. One held him while the other deliberately struck a poniard to his heart. Little Harouïs, who was there, was shocked at beholding this person, whom he knew well, stretched out upon the ground, *full-dressed, bloody, and dead.* His account (adds Madame de Sévigné) forcibly struck my imagination."*

The following letter contains a most graphic description of the French court, in all its voluptuous gaiety; and the glimpses which it furnishes of the actors on the brilliant scene, from the king and the favourite to Dangeau, the skilful gamester—cool, collected, and calculating—amidst the gallant prattle around him, give to its details a degree of life and animation not to be surpassed:—

TO MADAME DE GRIGNAN.

"Paris, Wednesday, 29th July (1676).

"We have a change of the scene here, which will gratify you as much as it does all the world. I was at Versailles last Saturday with the Villarses. You know the Queen's toilet, the mass, and the dinner? Well, there is no need any longer of suffocating ourselves in the crowd to get a glimpse of their majesties at table. At three the King, the Queen, Monsieur, Madame,

* We have taken the words in Italics from the version of the letters published in 1765, often a very meritorious one, probably "by various hands," some passages exhibiting an ignorance of the commonest terms, hardly possible to be reconciled with a knowledge of the rest.

Mademoiselle, and everything else which is royal, together with Madame de Montespan and train, and all the courtiers, and all the ladies—all, in short, which constitutes the court of France—is assembled in that beautiful apartment of the king's, which you remember. All is furnished divinely, all is magnificent. Such a thing as heat is unknown; you pass from one place to another without the slightest pressure. A game at *reversis* gives the company a form and a settlement. The king and Madame de Montespan keep a bank together: different tables are occupied by Monsieur, the Queen, and Madame de Soubise, Dangeau* and party, Langlée and party:—everywhere you see heaps of *louis d'ors*, they have no other counters. I saw Dangeau play, and thought what fools we all were beside him. He dreams of nothing but what concerns the game; he wins where others lose; he neglects nothing, profits by everything, never has his attention diverted; in short, his science bids defiance to chance. Two hundred thousand francs in ten days, a hundred thousand crowns in a month—these are the pretty memorandums he puts down in his pocket-book. He was kind enough to say that I was partners with him, so that I got an excellent seat. I made my obeisance to the King, as you told me; and he returned it, as if I had been young and handsome. The Queen talked as long to me about my illness, as if it had been a lying-in. The duke said a thousand kind things without minding a word he uttered. Marshal de Lorges attacked me in the name of the Chevalier de Grignan; in short, *tutti quanti* (the whole company). You know what it is to get a word from every body you meet. Madame de Montespan talked to me of Bourbon, and asked me how I liked Vichi, and whether the place did me good. She said that Bourbon, instead of curing a pain in one of her knees, did mischief to both. Her size is reduced by a good half, and yet her complexion, her eyes, and her lips, are as fine as ever. She was dressed all in French point, her hair in a

* The writer of the well-known Court-Diary.

thousand ringlets, the two side ones hanging low on her cheeks, black ribbons on her head, pearls (the same that belonged to Madame de l'Hopital), the loveliest diamond ear-rings, three or four bodkins—nothing else on the head; in short, a triumphant beauty worthy the admiration of all the foreign ambassadors. She was accused of preventing the whole French nation from seeing the king; she has restored him, you see, to their eyes; and you cannot conceive the joy it has given all the world, and the splendour it has thrown upon the court. This charming confusion, without confusion, of all which is the most select, continues from three till six. If couriers arrive, the king retires a moment to read the despatches, and returns. There is always some music going on, to which he listens, and which has an excellent effect. He talks with such of the ladies as are accustomed to enjoy that honour. In short, they leave play at six; there is no trouble of counting, for there is no sort of counters; the pools consist of at least five, perhaps six or seven hundred louis; the bigger ones of a thousand or twelve hundred. At first each person pools twenty, which is a hundred; and the dealer afterwards pools ten. The person who holds the knave is entitled to four louis; they pass; and when they play before the pool is taken, they forfeit sixteen, which teaches them not to play out of turn. Talking is incessantly going on, and there is no end of *hearts*. How many hearts have you? I have two, I have three, I have one, I have four; he has only three then, he has only four;—and Dangeau is delighted with all this chatter: he sees through the game—he draws his conclusions—he discovers which is the person he wants; truly he is your only man for holding the cards. At six, the carriages are at the door. The king is in one of them with Madame de Montespan, Monsieur and Madame de Thianges, and honest d'Heudicourt in a fool's paradise on the stool. You know how these open carriages are made; they do not sit face to face, but all looking the same way. The Queen occupies another with the Princess; and the rest come flocking after as it may happen. There are

then gondolas on the canal, and music; and at ten they come back, and then there is a play; and twelve strikes, and they go to supper; and thus rolls round the Saturday. If I were to tell you how often you were asked after—how many questions were put to me without waiting for answers—how often I neglected to answer—how little they cared, and how much less I did—you would see the *iniqua corte* (wicked court) before you in all its perfection. However, it never was so pleasant before, and everybody wishes it may last."

Not a word of the *morale* of the spectacle! Madame de Sévigné, who had one of the correctest reputations in France, wishes even it may last. *Iniqua corte* is a mere jesting phrase, applied to any court. Montespan was a friend of the family, though it knew Maintenon also, who was then preparing the downfall of the favourite. The latter, meantime, was a sort of vice-queen, reigning over the real one. When she journeyed, it was with a train of forty people; governors of provinces offered to meet her with addresses; and intendants presented her with boats like those of Cleopatra, painted and gilt, luxurious with crimson damask, and streaming with the colours of France and Navarre. Louis was such a god at that time—he shook his "ambrosial curls" over so veritable an Olympus, where his praises were hymned by loving goddesses, consenting heroes, and incense-bearing priests — that if marriage had been a less consecrated institution in the Catholic Church, and the Jesuits with their accommodating philosophy would have stood by him, one is almost tempted to believe he might have

crowned half a dozen queens at a time, and made the French pulpits hold forth with Milton on the merits of the patriarchal polygamies.

But, to say the truth, except when she chose to be in the humour for it, great part of Madame de Sévigné's enjoyment, wherever she was, looked as little to the *morale* of the thing as need be. It arose from her powers of discernment and description. No matter what kind of scene she beheld, whether exalted or humble, brilliant or gloomy, crowded or solitary; her sensibility turned all to account. She saw well for herself; and she knew, that what she saw she should enjoy over again, in telling it to her daughter. In the autumn of next year she is in the country, and pays a visit to an iron-foundry, where they made anchors. The scene is equally well felt with that at court. It is as good, in its way, as the blacksmith's in Spenser's "House of Care," where the sound was heard

> "Of many iron hammers, beating rank,
> And answering their weary turns around;"

and where the visitor is so glad to get away from the giant and his "strong grooms," all over smoke and horror.

EXTRACT OF A LETTER TO MADAME DE GRIGNAN.

"Friday, 1st October 1677.

* * * * "Yesterday evening at Cone, we descended into a veritable hell, the true forges of Vulcan. Eight or ten cyclops were at work, forging, not arms for Æneas, but anchors for

ships. You never saw strokes redoubled so justly, nor with so admirable a cadence. We stood in the middle of four furnaces, and the demons came passing about us, all melting in sweat, with pale faces, wild-staring eyes, savage mustaches, and hair long and black; a sight enough to frighten less well-bred folks than ourselves. As to me, I could not comprehend the possibility of refusing any thing which these gentlemen, in their hell, might have chosen to exact. We got out at last by the help of a shower of silver, with which we took care to refresh their souls and facilitate our exit."

This description is immediately followed by one as lively, of another sort.

"We had a taste, the evening before, at Nevers, of the most daring race you ever beheld. Four fair ladies, in a carriage, having seen us pass them in ours, had such a desire to behold our faces a second time, that they must needs get before us again, on a causeway made only for one coach. My dear, their coachman brushed our very whiskers; it is a mercy they were not pitched into the river; we all cried out, 'for God's sake;' they, for their parts, were dying with laughter; and they kept galloping on *above* us and before us, in so tremendous and unaccountable a manner, that we have not got rid of the fright to this moment."

There is a little repetition in the following, because truth required it; otherwise it is all as good as new, fresh from the same mint that throws forth everything at a heat—whether anchors, or diamond ear-rings, or a coach in a gallop.

"Paris, 29th November (1679).

* * * "I have been to this wedding of Madame de Louvois. How shall I describe it? Magnificence, illuminations, all France, dresses all gold and brocade, jewels, braziers full of fire,

and stands full of flowers, confusions of carriages, cries out of doors, flambeaus, pushings back, people knocked up;—in short, a whirlwind, a distraction; questions without answers, compliments without knowing what is said, civilities without knowing who is spoken to, feet entangled in trains. From the middle of all this, issue inquiries after your health; which, not being answered as quick as lightning, the inquirers pass on, contented to remain in the state of ignorance and indifference in which they were made. *O vanity of vanities!* Pretty little De Mouchy has had the smallpox. *O vanity*, et cetera!"

In Boswell's "Life of Johnson" is a reference by the great and gloomy moralist to a passage in Madame de Sévigné, in which she speaks of existence having been imposed upon her without her consent; but the conclusion he draws from it as to her opinion of life in general, is worthy of the critic who "never read books through." The momentary effusion of spleen is contradicted by the whole correspondence. She occasionally vents her dissatisfaction at a rainy day, or the perplexity produced in her mind by a sermon; and when her tears begin flowing for a pain in her daughter's little finger, it is certainly no easy matter to stop them; but there was a luxury at the heart of this woe. Her ordinary notions of life were no more like Johnson's, than rose-colour is like black, or health like disease. She repeatedly proclaims, and almost always shows, her delight in existence; and has disputes with her daughter, in which she laments that she does not possess the same turn of mind. There is a passage, we grant, on the subject of old age, which contains

a reflection similar to the one alluded to by Johnson, and which has been deservedly admired for its force and honesty. But even in this passage, the germ of the thought was suggested by the melancholy of another person, not by her own. Madame de la Fayette had written her a letter urging her to retrieve her affairs and secure her health, by accepting some money from her friends, and quitting the Rocks for Paris; — offers which, however handsomely meant, she declined with many thanks, and not a little secret indignation; for she was very jealous of her independence. In the course of this letter, Madame de la Fayette, who herself was irritable with disease, and who did not write it in a style much calculated to prevent the uneasiness it caused, made abrupt use of the words, "You are old." The little hard sentence came like a blow upon the lively, elderly lady. She did not like it at all; and thus wrote of it to her daughter:—

"So you were struck with the expression of Madame de la Fayette, blended with so much friendship. 'T was a truth, I own, which I ought to have borne in mind; and yet I must confess it astonished me, for I do not yet perceive in myself any such decay. Nevertheless, I cannot help making many reflections and calculations, and I find the conditions of life hard enough. It seems to me that I have been dragged, against my will, to the fatal period when old age must be endured; I see it; I have come to it; and I would fain, if I could help it, not go any further; not advance a step more in the road of infirmities, of pains, of losses of memory, of *disfigurements* ready to do me outrage; and I hear a voice which says, You must go on in

spite of yourself; or, if you will not go on, you must die;—and this is another extremity, from which nature revolts. Such is the lot, however, of all who advance beyond middle life. What is their resource? To think of the will of God and of the universal law; and so restore reason to its place, and be patient. Be you then patient, accordingly, my dear child, and let not your affection soften into such tears as reason must condemn."

The whole heart and good sense of humanity seem to speak in passages like these, equally removed from the frights of the superstitious and the flimsiness or falsehood of levity. The ordinary comfort and good prospects of Madame de Sévigné's existence made her write with double force on these graver subjects, when they presented themselves to her mind. So, in her famous notice of the death of Louvois the minister — never, in a few words, were past ascendency and sudden nothingness more impressively contrasted.

"I am so astonished at the news of the sudden death of M. de Louvois, that I am at a loss how to speak of it. Dead, however, he is, this great minister, this potent being, who occupied so great a place; whose *me* (*le moi*), as M. Nicole says, had so wide a dominion; who was the centre of so many orbs. What affairs had he not to manage! what designs, what projects, what secrets! what interests to unravel, what wars to undertake, what intrigues, what noble games at chess to play and to direct! Ah! my God, give me a little time: I want to give check to the Duke of Savoy—checkmate to the Prince of Orange. No, no, you shall not have a moment—not a single moment. Are events like these to be talked of? Not they. We must reflect upon them in our closets."

This is part of a letter to her cousin Coulanges,

written in the year 1691. Five years afterwards she died.

The two English writers who have shown the greatest admiration of Madame de Sévigné, are Horace Walpole and Sir James Mackintosh. The enthusiasm of Walpole, who was himself a distinguished letter-writer and wit, is mixed up with a good deal of self-love. He bows to his own image in the mirror beside her. During one of his excursions to Paris, he visits the Hôtel de Carnavalet and the house at Livry; and has thus described his impressions:—

"Madame de Chabot I called on last night. She was not at home, but the Hôtel de Carnavalet was; and I stopped on purpose to say an Ave-Maria before it." (This pun is suggested by one in Bussy Rabutin.) "It is a very singular building, not at all in the French style, and looks like an *ex voto*, raised to her honour by some of her foreign votaries. I don't think her half-honoured enough in her own country."*

His visit to Livry is recorded in a letter to his friend Montague:—

"One must be just to all the world. Madame Roland, I find, has been in the country, and at Versailles, and was so obliging as to call on me this morning; but I was so disobliging as not to be awake. I was dreaming dreams; in short, I had dined at Livry; yes, yes, at Livry, with a Langlade and De la Rochefoucauld. The abbey is now possessed by an Abbé de Malherbe, with whom I am acquainted, and who had given me a general invitation. I put it off to the last moment, that the

* Letters, &c. vol. v. p. 74, edit. 1840.

bois and *allées* might set off the scene a little, and contribute to the vision; but it did not want it. Livry is situate in the Forêt de Bondi, very agreeably on a flat, but with hills near it, and in prospect. There is a great air of simplicity and *rural* about it, more regular than our taste, but with an old-fashioned tranquillity, and nothing of *colifichet* (frippery). Not a tree exists that remembers the charming woman, because in this country an old tree is a traitor, and forfeits his head to the crown; but the plantations are not young, and might very well be as they were in her time. The Abbé's house is decent and snug; a few paces from it is the sacred pavilion built for Madame de Sévigné by her uncle, and much as it was in her day; a small saloon below for dinner, then an arcade, but the niche, now closed, and painted in fresco with medallions of her, the Grignan, the Fayette, and the Rochefoucauld. Above, a handsome large room, with a chimney-piece in the best taste of Louis the Fourteenth's time; a Holy Family in good relief over it, and the cipher of her uncle Coulanges; a neat little bedchamber within, and two or three clean little chambers over them. On one side of the garden, leading to the great road, is a little bridge of wood, on which the dear woman used to wait for the courier that brought her daughter's letters. Judge with what veneration and satisfaction I set my foot upon it! If you will come to France with me next year, we will go and sacrifice on that sacred spot together."—Id. p. 142.

Sir James Mackintosh became intimate with the letters of Madame de Sévigné during his voyage to India, and has left some remarks upon them in the Diary published in his Life.

"The great charm," he says, "of her character seems to me a *natural* virtue. In what she does, as well as in what she says, she is unforced and unstudied; nobody, I think, had so much morality without constraint, and played so much with amiable

feelings without falling into vice. Her ingenious, lively, social disposition, gave the direction to her mental power. She has so filled my heart with affectionate interest in her as a living friend, that I can scarcely bring myself to think of her as a writer, or as having a style; but she has become a celebrated, perhaps an immortal writer, without expecting it: she is the only classical writer who never conceived the possibility of acquiring fame. Without a great force of style, she could not have communicated those feelings. In what does that talent consist? It seems mainly to consist in the power of working bold metaphors, and unexpected turns of expression, out of the most familiar part of conversational language."*

Sir James proceeds to give an interesting analysis of this kind of style, and the way in which it obtains ascendency in the most polished circles; and all that he says of it is very true. But it seems to us, that the main secret of the "*charm*" of Madame de Sévigné is to be found neither in her "natural virtue," nor in the style in which it expressed itself, but in something which interests us still more for our own sakes than the writer's, and which instinctively compelled her to adopt that style as its natural language. We doubt extremely, in the first place, whether any great "charm" is ever felt in the virtue, natural or otherwise, however it may be respected. Readers are glad, certainly, that the correctness of her reputation enabled her to write with so much gaiety and boldness; and perhaps (without at all taking for granted what Bussy

* Memoirs of the Life of the Right Hon. Sir James Mackintosh. 2nd edit. vol. ii. p. 217.

Rabutin intimates about secret lovers) it gives a zest to certain freedoms in her conversation, which are by no means rare; for she was anything but a prude. We are not sure that her character for personal correctness does not sometimes produce even an awkward impression, in connexion with her relations to the court and the mistresses; though the manners of the day, and her superiority to sermonizing and hypocrisy, relieve it from one of a more painful nature. Certain we are, however, that we should have liked her still better, had she manifested a power to love somebody else besides her children; had she married again, for instance, instead of passing a long widowhood from her five-and-twentieth year, not, assuredly, out of devotion to her husband's memory. Such a marriage, we think, would have been quite as natural as any virtue she possessed. The only mention of her husband that we can recollect in all her correspondence, with the exception of the allusion to Ninon, is in the following date of a letter :—

"Paris, Friday, Feb. 5, 1672.—This day thousand years I was married."

We do not accuse her of heartlessness. We believe she had a very good heart. Probably, she liked to be her own mistress; but this does not quite explain the matter in so loving a person. There were people in her own time who doubted the love for her daughter—surely with great want of justice.

But natural as that virtue was, and delightful as it is to see it, was the *excess* of it quite so natural? or does a thorough intimacy with the letters confirm our belief in that excess? It does not. The love was real and great; but the secret of what appears to be its extravagance is, perhaps, to be found in the love of power; or, not to speak harshly, in the inability of a fond mother to leave off her habits of guidance and dictation, and the sense of her importance to her child. Hence a fidgetiness on one side, which was too much allied to exaction and self-will, and a proportionate tendency to ill-concealed, and at last open impatience on the other. The demand for letters was not only incessant and avowed; it was to be met with as zealous a desire, on the daughter's part, to supply them. If little is written, pray write more: if much, don't write so much for fear of headaches. If the headaches are complained of, what misery! if not complained of, something worse and more cruel has taken place—it is a concealment. Friends must take care how they speak of the daughter as too well and happy. The mother then brings to our mind the Falkland of Sheridan, and expresses her disgust at these "perfect-health folks." Even lovers tire under such *surveillance:* and as affections between mother and child, however beautiful, are not, in the nature of things, of a like measure of reciprocity, a similar result would have been looked for by the discerning eyes of Madame de Sévigné, had the case been any other than her

own. But the tears of self-love mingle with those of love, and blind the kindest natures to the difference. It is too certain, or rather it is a fact which reduces the love to a good honest natural size, and therefore ought not, so far, to be lamented, that this fond mother and daughter, fond though they were, jangled sometimes, like their inferiors, both when absent and present, leaving nevertheless a large measure of affection to diffuse itself in joy and comfort over the rest of their intercourse. It is a common case, and we like neither of them a jot the less for it. We may only be allowed to repeat our wish (as Madame de Grignan must often have done), that the "dear Marie de Rabutin," as Sir James Mackintosh calls her, had had a second husband, to divert some of the responsibilities of affection from her daughter's head. Let us recollect, after all, that we should not have heard of the distress but for the affection; that millions who might think fit to throw stones at it, would in reality have no right to throw a pebble; and that the wit which has rendered it immortal, is beautiful for every species of truth, but this single deficiency in self-knowledge.

That is the great charm of Madame de Sévigné —*truth*. Truth, wit, and animal spirits compose the secret of her delightfulness; but truth above all, for it is that which shows all the rest to be true. If she had not more natural virtues than most other good people, she had more natural *manners*; and the universality of her taste, and the vivacity of her

spirits, giving her the widest range of enjoyment, she expressed herself naturally on all subjects, and did not disdain the simplest and most familiar phraseology, when the truth required it. Familiarities of style, taken by themselves, have been common more or less to all wits, from the days of Aristophanes to those of Byron; and, in general, so have animal spirits. Rabelais was full of both. The followers of Pulci and Berni, in Italy, abound in them. What distinguishes Madame de Sévigné is, first, that she was a woman so writing, which till her time had been a thing unknown, and has not been since witnessed in any such charming degree; and second, and above all, that she writes "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth;" never giving us falsehood of any kind, not even a single false metaphor, or only half-true simile or description; nor writing for any purpose on earth, but to say what she felt, and please those who could feel with her. If we consider how few writers there are, even among the best, to whom this praise, in its integrity, can apply, we shall be struck, perhaps, with a little surprise and sorrow for the craft of authors in general; but certainly with double admiration for Madame de Sévigné. We do not mean to say that she is always right in opinion, or that she had no party or conventional feelings. She entertained, for many years, some strong prejudices. She was bred up in so exclusive an admiration for the poetry of Corneille, that she thought Racine would go out of

fashion. Her loyalty made her astonished to find that Louis was not invincible; and her connection with the Count de Grignan, who was employed in the *dragonades* against the Huguenots, led her but negatively to disapprove those inhuman absurdities. But these were accidents of friendship or education: her understanding outlived them; nor did they hinder her, meantime, from describing truthfully what she felt, and from being right as well as true in nine-tenths of it all. Her sincerity made even her errors a part of her truth. She never pretended to be above what she felt; never assumed a profound knowledge; never disguised an ignorance. Her mirth, and her descriptions, may sometimes appear exaggerated; but the spirit of truth, not of contradiction, is in them; and excess in such cases is not falsehood, but enjoyment—not the wine adulterated, but the cup running over. All her wit is healthy; all its images entire and applicable throughout—not palsy-stricken with irrelevance; not forced in, and then found wanting, like Walpole's conceit about the trees, in the passage above quoted. Madame de Sévigné never wrote such a passage in her life. All her lightest and most fanciful images, all her most daring expressions, have the strictest propriety, the most genuine feeling, a home in the heart of truth; —as when, for example, she says, amidst continual feasting, that she is "famished for want of hunger;" that there were no "interlineations" in the conversation of a lady who spoke from the heart; that she

went to vespers one evening out of pure opposition, which taught her to comprehend the "sacred obstinacy of martyrdom;" that she did not keep a "philosopher's shop;" that it is difficult for people in trouble to "bear thunder-claps of bliss in others." It is the same from the first letter we have quoted to the last; from the proud and merry boasting of the young mother with a boy, to the candid shudder about the approach of old age, and the refusal of death to grant a moment to the dying statesman—"no, not a single moment." She loved nature and truth without misgiving; and nature and truth loved her in return, and have crowned her with glory and honour.

THE END.

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